Bonhoeffer: Responsible Work

A diachronic approach to a synchronic theme: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of work

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to highlight in a new way the importance of work to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, both in what he wrote and how he lived, and draws upon history, biography, and theology. It constructs a narrative drawn from the interrelation between these elements in an innovative fashion, seeking to convey a fresh sense of the way in which Bonhoeffer's theology relates to the context of the time. A central argument of the study is that Bonhoeffer's engagement with the subject of work and his theology of work is something foundationally important to him and a theme which evolves and develops over time. Proposing work as a central hermeneutical key to the understanding of Bonhoeffer is a task which has not been attempted before. The thesis tracks the theme of work and its development, noting over the course of Bonhoeffer's life how a fuller understanding of the centrality of work throws up fresh understandings of a number of key transition points in his life and makes sense of them in a new way.The final section argues that Bonhoeffer's work in resistance in Nazi Germany was good work and that a theological formulation which guided Bonhoeffer towards his role in tyrannicide was present in his work-in-progress doctrine of the mandates, an incomplete doctrine which in the end is a hope-filled one. Methodologically, this thesis tracks the development and articulation of Bonhoeffer's theology of work from the early days through to his arrest, focussing mainly, but not entirely, on his written output in the *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Werke* (DBW) series, but not including the prison theology because such an approach appropriately reflects the un-finished nature of Bonhoeffer's theology.

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of another application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or institute of learning.

Signed

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This thesis contains 87,397 words

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

This introductory chapter comprises four sections: a statement of the thesis; a chapter summary, providing a brief overview of what each chapter will present and argue; a discussion of how far work has been present or absent as a theme in previous Bonhoeffer scholarship; and a section entitled 'Matters of translation' mentioning pertinent issues on this subject.

1.1 Statement of the thesis

If the landscape of Bonhoeffer study is a richly pebbled beach, one large stone which has not yet been turned over and examined is that of work. A useful word here is *évolution*[1] in the sense that I will argue that Bonhoeffer does not just operate with a flat notion of work, but rather, that his theological thinking in this area changes, matures and develops over time, and that by adopting a developmental approach, it becomes possible to demonstrate that this is indeed something with which Bonhoeffer is profoundly concerned. I will call this Bonhoeffer's work journey. I will accordingly track the development and articulation of Bonhoeffer's theology of work from the early days through to his arrest, focussing primarily, but not exclusively, on his written output in the DBW series. I have not included the prison theology, partly because of the need to restrict the scope of this project, but partly also owing to the provisional nature of theology *per se* (cf. my additional comments immediately below). It is a theology which is linked from the earliest days with an exploration of the concept of work as responsibility, and integrity, and one which as it evolves comes to underpin Bonhoeffer's practice of resistance. In order to advance this thesis I will address these questions via a diachronic reading of Bonhoeffer's work. Methodologically, the thesis will work to combine biography, history and theology, and endeavour to highlight in an innovative fashion the revealing interrelation between historical events and Bonhoeffer's life and theological thinking, so that the story of the development of Bonhoeffer's work theology via his life circumstances becomes a central aspect of this thesis. In that sense, this thesis is a diachronic approach to a synchronic theme, such as (but not comparable to) Bruce McCormack's 1995 publication *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology*.[2] Writing with the received interpretation of Karl Barth in view, McCormack comments (466):

[1] I am using the French word as in that language it expresses a sense of the furthering or advancement of a work career.

[2] The fact that Bonhoeffer's writing has come down to us in an 'un-finished' or 'work-in-progress'way contributes in an intruiging fashion towards the sense (not able to be more fully developed here) of theology itself as narrative. W. Brueggemann, writing in *Mandate to Difference* (2007, Westminster John Knox) asserts that (11): 'we in the church have a peculiar task today and every day: to weave together an honest, complex, narrative account of the city- *narrative* because the city is still under way and the story remains to be constructed; *complex* because the city consists in so many competing, conflicted voices that will not be readily harmonized' and *honest* because we are all adherents to the God of all truth'.

> Perhaps the most pressing need in contemporary theology is a historical one. It is high time that we subject the dominant historiography of nineteenth and twentieth century theology to critical scrutiny.

My own concerns are different, but McCormack's point is well made. My own reasons for wishing to adopt the approach outlined are numerous and encompass personal preference, a supervisor's intuition, and a sense of inadequacy left by the disturbing omission of context throughout so much theological writing, and especially theological writing about Bonhoeffer. But one reason in particular for this choice is that Bonhoeffer's theology by its very nature, given his premature death, and especially the laborious process by which fragments, often undated, of his writing have been gathered together, has the feel of a work-in-progress, a composition subject to the randomness of grace, and to on-going revision. Concepts are provisional, and not set in stone, in the way that life itself is an amazing, temporary gift; thus examining a story as it develops, which is suddenly cut off, means that things are left 'ragged' (an excellent theological word) but needing to stand as they are on their own merits. Such an approach sits well with a study of Bonhoeffer and my hope and sense is that it will prove fruitful here.

1.2 Chapter Summary

A contextualising Chapter two will argue that the German experience of work under the Nazis in the period 1926-1945, and particularly between 1938-1945, amounted to the betrayal and dehumanisation of work, which contributed to, and represented, a moral and theological crisis, into which Bonhoeffer's resistance would make a positive contribution. An enhanced degree of contextualization is helpful so that we may understand the dialogue into which Bonhoeffer is entering and some of the broader contemporary issues in which he played a part.

To progress this, Chapter three will look at Bonhoeffer's family background and how the experience of his family home informed his thinking about work, and will explore the significance of Lutheran thinking on work in this light, closing with a reflection on the theme of 'How does the Christian believer connect life and work?'

The fourth Chapter 'A well-hidden *Verlassenheit*' [forlorn-ness] will argue that as Bonhoeffer's life and experiences continue to deepen his thinking about work, he chooses to prioritise work over a relationship with Elizabeth Zinn which might, had he not made this choice, have developed in the direction of marriage. In *Act and Being* Bonhoeffer makes the point that the pathway to liberation from the violation of reality represented by a framework grafted around the autonomous, isolated I, which, centred around the omnicompetence of the knowing mind,

understands everything from itself, travels of necessity via the '*Lichtung*' (literally: clearing)[3] of the Christian community. The chapter makes the connection between Bonhoeffer's life and writing by asking whether Bonhoeffer was in fact experiencing despair as he chose to give this community priority at some personal cost.

The fifth chapter, '*Verantwortliche theologische Arbeit'* introduces the importance of 'order' in society, tracing how the concept came to be abused in Germany and notes particularly in context the importance of the influence on Bonhoeffer of Stählin and Brunner. A detailed engagement with Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* will contest that the influence of this work on Bonhoeffer was somewhat more profound than has previously been acknowledged. The chapter traces the work thread of Bonhoeffer's life in sufficient detail to demonstrate that when the hermeneutical key of work is applied to an understanding of Bonhoeffer, two insights in particular are gained: first, there is considerable light shed on the un-solved question as to when in 1932 his life took a 'turn'. The chapter develops an argument that the 'turn' which happened for Bonhoeffer may have had its roots in a conference speech in Czechoslovakia in July 1932. It is at this time that he articulates clearly and definitively the 'job' of responsible theological work. Second, the chapter argues that it is in Bonhoeffer's articulation of the job of responsible theological work that he deepens his own understanding of work and voices the call to his own life's work in resisting the National Socialist regime.

Chapter six, '*Unser Kampf',* suggests that the question which Bonhoeffer has been formulating is: how can a Christian today live and work with integrity? During this period Bonhoeffer journeyed through a position of using paid work as a basis for opposition to the regime to a realisation in 1934 that work may well mean resistance unto death, a realisation which he took with him as he continued thinking about how to live and work through to 1939. It is one where he saw the workplace increasingly as the place where the reality of faith is expressed. The chapter explores his rediscovery from a place of his own financial integrity, of a Luther-inspired, committed discipleship, centred on the Bible, which finds expression in his own work in Finkenwalde[4], the pastorates and particularly in his writing of *Nachfolge*. The chapter traces Bonhoeffer's understanding of work as clergy, pastoral work and preaching work, as well as the work of discipleship: an approach which he experienced as an on-going challenge, at a time when so many around him found reasons or excuses to continue (or even begin) to accept remuneration from a compromised church organisational structure. This chapter argues that because of the centrality of work for Bonhoeffer, the date of 31st July 1938 is a milestone of great significance for Bonhoeffer's entry to the conspiracy, and that its true significance has until now been inadequately represented.

[3] Heidegger uses the analogy of a clearing within a forest as a place of heightened understanding.
[4] The location of the illegal seminary where Bonhoeffer trained ordinands for the Confessing Church.

Chapter seven further considers the theme '*Beruf ist Verantwortung'* – work is responsibility. The wartime period during which Bonhoeffer wrote *Ethics* largely co-incides with his engagement to Maria von Wedemeyer and his most active involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler. The thematic terms around his theological thinking about work are 'responsibility' and 'freedom' and it is apparent that Bonhoeffer saw his resistance involvement - which encompassed helping to transport the explosive devices used in the March 1943 Schlabrendorff attempt on Hitler's life - as a work calling, which he had the (freely assumed) responsibility to fulfil. The chapter will use this evidence, together with Bonhoeffer's written work, to argue that central to this decision was Bonhoeffer's formulation of the mandate of work, a concept which Bonhoeffer experimented with during this, what was to be the latter part of his life, and that this aspect of his legacy has, accordingly, until now been undervalued.

1.3 Work in previous Bonhoeffer scholarship

In theological writing, the subject of work itself has often been omitted; for evidence of this we need look no further than, for example, in the list of 'Brief Contents' of Alistair McGrath's standard textbook '*Christian Theology – An Introduction*', where work is conspicuously absent from the list of headings and from the index (McGrath, 1999, iii-iv). Conscious perhaps of this, in recent years a number of writers, both from the more popular angle as well as those of a more serious theological persuasion, have responded to this wider lack of theological engagement by providing an increasing number of generally helpful contributions in this now growing field, to the point where the number of books, scholarly projects, academic programs and online discussions has grown exponentially in the last two decades. But despite this fashionability, Christians have often been poorly served by the literature available, and some have been frustrated by the shallowness of the advice provided and the examples cited. More work is needed, and in contributing towards this field, Bonhoeffer may have insights to offer, but he has hardly been considered or evaluated in relation to an emerging theology of work. The criticism of shallowness cannot remotely be applied to Ben Witherington in *Work: a Kingdom Perspective on Labor*, Tim Keller in *Every Good Endeavour – Connecting your work to God's plan for the World*, John Hughes in *The End of Work,* and Darrell Cosden in *The Heavenly Good of Earthly Work,* but they do accurately reflect the decision of the vast majority of the number of writers on work, including Miroslav Volf (whose *Work in the Spirit* contribution has proven to be of enduring value) who have not yet made a serious attempt (or any attempt at all) to engage with the theology of Bonhoeffer. One such writer is Esther Reed whose *Work for God's Sake* is a particularly serious and thoughtful contribution to the field. Reed thinks theologically about what the Bible has to say about work and provides a helpful discussion of many of the words used in Scripture for work. The publication helps to build the case for the importance of the subject by citing (2010, 22):

> The TUC (Trades Union Congress) has spoken of 'lip service' paid to work-life balance. The Work Foundation says public sector work-life balance is 'more rhetoric than reality'. […] According to the Office for National Statistics, the amount of time spent on voluntary work fell from 2.3 billion hours in 1995 to 1.6 billion hours in 2000. […] In 'burnout Britain', all these organisations imply, many people feel that no-one can hear them scream.

When establishing the significance of the field, Reed also helpfully underlines the importance of the contribution made by Pope John Paul II's 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens* (LE). Reed also writes at length about the range of (highly) problematic issues surrounding the concept of vocation (84-92), a helpful list which will be further added to in a later section of this introduction. Reed further offers a very helpful suggested form of prayer (56) for the situations and challenges of the coming working week for believers to pray, and her review culminates with the suggestion that with respect to Christian presence and witness at work it can be helpful to think in terms of three 'models': 'Salt and Light' (more open testimony); 'Yeast in the Dough', where believers hardly 'come out'; and the less overt, but equally valid 'Wisdom' model, for the public square where (110): 'mention of 'God' might add nothing to the discussion…this presupposes an understanding of natural law'. Reed also makes the valid point in relation to theology in general that (29):

> Responsible Christian ethics must engage with the complexities of new ways of thinking about 'green growth' in relation to the issues of social justice. Whilst there has been some interest recently in the academic theological community about work (Gilbert Meilander, Thomas Darrell Cosden, John Hughes) no-one has yet rethought the meaning and ethics of work with adequate attention to ecological economics or in ways suggested by liturgical reasoning.

But what concerns us here is that in the context of all of the above, Reed makes no allusion to Bonhoeffer. In fact, when Reed poses the question 'Whatever happened to the hope of heaven?', Bonhoeffer's name is somewhat conspicuous by its absence from quite an extensive list in the paragraph where she writes (94):

> That few sermons these days are preached on the hope of heaven may be explained, perhaps, by the relative dearth of recent (Protestant) theological reflection on heaven and hell as they concern Christian ethics, human subjectivity, that is, how we understand our 'personhood', personal identity after death and such like. In the twentieth century, the great Protestant theological minds (Rudolph Bultmann, Karl Barth, Jürgen Moltmann, Eberhard Jüngel and Wolfhart Pannenberg) did not have these matters as their central concern. They

> talked variously about hope, eschatology, and the coming of God's kingdom on earth but tended to downplay the doctrine of heaven and especially its personal aspects.

Again, the point here is not to engage with Reed on the broad spectrum of issues raised by this assertion, including the lack of theological reflection on the hope of heaven, but rather, specifically, to note Bonhoeffer's absence, as evidence that Bonhoeffer has hardly been considered as a theologian whose contribution towards a theology of work is of any particular note.[5] Generally, among writers on work, both among the more serious theological and the more popular variety, Bonhoeffer is not referred to. The tendency is that any reference to him is more of a cursory nature, and feels more of a general respectful nod in his direction, rather than a serious attempt to engage with his thought. As an example of this, Ken Costa's very helpful *God at Work* (2013) offers a host of 'nuggets of wisdom' and encouragements to people open to integrating faith and work. Many of these come in the form of 'stories of encouragement', written by those with whom he has come into contact, wrestling with the diverse issues which living out an everyday faith in a working environment can bring. Costa writes that Jesus (29):

> …did not come to give us a new form of spiritual life disconnected from the world. He came to continue and restore the patterns of work initiated by his father…God has given us a creation mandate to be stewards of his created order (Genesis 1:28).

This is part of Costa's wider point about the unhelpfulness of the proclivity he has observed extensively in workplace-related situations to divide and separate the sacred from the secular. It is on a closely related topic, that of the need to engage with the realities of life, as opposed to being escapist, to which he adduces Bonhoeffer, when he writes (33):' Theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, spoke of the calling of Christians to be 'this worldly', living among the harsh realities of life'.

Whilst this is a valid observation, and one made within a book about work, it does not represent a profound engagement with Bonhoeffer.

From this brief but representative review it emerges that Bonhoeffer has been afforded little consideration as a work theologian. But what of the countless scholars who have reflected and written about Bonhoeffer, and have found a different hermeneutic key to be crucial towards an understanding of his theology? Has any one of them considered that work might be a useful lens through which to interpret his extensive output? The answer is 'No'. But before this thesis addresses a reading of Bonhoeffer with work as a 'key', it is first important to demonstrate how others have successfully argued for a wholly different understanding of Bonhoeffer, showing in

[5] My final chapter will address the issue of hope contained within Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates.

every instance that each one is equally valid, and that any central motif offered needs to be understood in this light: only as a possible, but not exclusive, alternative. The three authors this thesis will examine are Green, Dumas and Nickson, and the different central motif each has discerned as central to Bonhoeffer are those, respectively, of sociality, reality and freedom. This is not a random choice, albeit a selection made from an extremely long list of possible contenders. In my view the workplace, and in particular the healthy workplace, is about interpersonal relationships. It is in the workplace that the individual knows fully that no one is an island and either chooses to embrace a sense of interdependence (and make a success of work) or opts out of such an understanding (with devastating consequences). Thus sociality can be seen to be of paramount importance in work. But because work is remunerated (often) and because it is demanding (usually), it is also about connecting with the realities of life in a critical fashion. In the workplace, the realities of how people live cannot generally stay hidden for very long and hence the association of work and reality is profound. There is something in the very nature of work that connects us with others, enhancing our connection with reality, and helping us discover our sense of self and purpose. But that can only truly happen in freedom, and it is about freedom that Luther is thinking when he writes (*The Christian in Society*, LW 44:108):

> As the bird is born to fly, so humankind is born to work. Now birds fly without anxiety and without covetousness and so we should work without anxiety and without covetousness.

So when people find that their workplace has become either associated with un-freedom, or slavery, they either leave or rebel, or *in extremis* remain in un-free (unhealthy) work. Luther's image of the bird is apposite here: we are born to work in freedom. The well-known idiom reflects this: 'free as a bird'. A caged bird is a tragedy since birds are born to fly. The concept of freedom is deeply connected with work.[6] Accordingly, an engagement with these three motifs will be most fruitful in thinking about work. The choice of these three theologians, two of them well known, and one largely unknown, and each from a different era (and hence representative at one level of the many over time who have written about Bonhoeffer) will both enhance and inform a discussion about work, as well as help provide a better platform from which to explore more fully the importance of the subject of work to, and for, Bonhoeffer himself.

Clifford Green: Bonhoeffer: a Theology of Sociality

Clifford Green's work '*Bonhoeffer – a Theology of Sociality'* traces Bonhoeffer's thought both in its continuity and its development between *Sanctorum Communio* and the prison theology.

[6] This is not least evident in the barefaced lie *Arbeit macht Frei* adopted by the National Socialists as an inscription over the gate of many a concentration camp.

True to its title, his central thesis is that Bonhoeffer sees all human life as essentially social, and that the human person always exists in relation to an 'other'. Encountering the will of such an 'other' is the encountering of a '*Grenze*'[limit] which at the same time is an all-important participation in reality. Green's assessment is that, particularly in his early writing, Bonhoeffer's thought is much pre-occupied with the problem of the powerful, dominant self, closely linked to the issue of the '*Omnikompetenz*' of the knowing mind. In this flow of thought, the context and role of the Church-Community is salvific, because only in relation to an encounter of persons (such as envisaged when Church really is Church) is Christ really revealed and present. This '*Gemeinde'* [Church-Community] is the locus of genuine '*Daseinsverständnis'* [existential self-understanding]: conceptually Bonhoeffer sees the church as the new humanity, a place where, by contrast with the isolation of the knowing I which is alone with itself in a violated world, the human community of persons, centred on Christ, comes into being in receiving the sacrament (DBW 2: 121):

> In receiving the sacrament I, the historical, whole human being (individual and humanity) am encountered and I believe, i.e. I know myself borne. I am borne (*pati*). Therefore I am (*esse*). Therefore I believe (*agere*). Here the circle closes. Here even the *agere* is *pati*.

Green observes that Bonhoeffer's theological method is to relate every question to the revelation in Christ. He writes (1972, 99): 'theologically, human truth must be understood as personal and social, corresponding to the communal nature of the revelation of Christ as person'. Yet whilst everything is related to this revelation, it is, for Green, anchored in sociality, in a way that uniquely ties together numerous thematic concepts of human life and development in relation to God. He writes (99):

> The transition from 'being in Adam' to 'being in Christ' is a movement which involves several themes: from autonomous self-understanding to understanding oneself from revelation; from trying to be a lord and creator to finding oneself as God's creature under the lordship of Christ; from isolated self-imprisonment to community; from the dominance of others and of nature to the love of others: from self-seeking to freedom for others; and from conscience and self-reflection to faith and forgiveness in Christ.

In further articulation of this thesis Green argues that (204):

> In the November 1932 address 'Thy Kingdom come!' the relationship of the Church and state is discussed in the conceptuality of the theology of sociality. Church and state are the 'two-fold form' of the presence of God's kingdom in the world which God preserves after the fall (DBW 12, 272,f., 276).

Green further argues that in this context of 'preservation', for Bonhoeffer the challenge of the dominating ego with its power over others and the related and ensuing loss of mutual love in community, is thus at the heart of the soteriological problem. In this respect, the human conscience is not much help, as it is self-related. (Or, worse still in Luther's case, the source of works to placate its sense of internal guilt, creating a nightmarish treadmill, with hatred of God and self at the centre). Green discerns a parallel in this aspect of Bonhoeffer's soteriology. He makes a link between Bonhoeffer's deep concern about power in the corporate life of society as he writes (DBW 13: 410) that 'Christianity stands or falls with its revolutionary protest against violence, arbitrariness, pride of power and with its plea for the weak' and his (Bonhoeffer's) concern with the personal power of the ego. Green comments (172):

> There can be no question that this theology of Christ as the true power and authority offered a way of redemption to German society and posed the crucial spiritual issue of the time.

It was an issue which was both corporate and personal: Green cites Bonhoeffer's account of Luther's entry into the monastery like a knight storming the gates of heaven, whose besetting sin, we are asked to believe, is his (ambition and) egocentric wilfulness' and contrasts it with Luther's own verdict on the same subject. It was, rather, that 'for all his efforts to serve God, he hated the God who called for his own love' (167). Green goes on to make the point that (167) 'Bonhoeffer's portrait of Luther begins to resemble quite closely what Bonhoeffer has revealed of himself'. Accordingly Green's thesis sees this double aspect at work in relation to Bonhoeffer's *Nachfolge*: Green writes (156):

> In brief, he still sees (in *Discipleship*) human beings as essentially social persons whose personal and corporate relationships have become self-contradictory through egotism and destructive power.

Thus at the same time as seeing human society in these terms, Green argues that Bonhoeffer is himself on a journey in the writing of *Nachfolge*, which Green summarises (in relation to the later prison theology) as being a journey from ego suppression to ego autonomy. Green also writes that during this time period 1934-1936 theology becomes for Bonhoeffer an 'existential matter of obedience of life' (153) and that in this light Bonhoeffer's expression 'not 'phraseological' but 'real'' must be understood 'as adding existential reality to his conceptual structure of the theology of sociality'(153).

Another existentially important issue (and one which anticipates another possible hermeneutical key to understanding Bonhoeffer, the motif of freedom, identified by Ann Nickson, which will be discussed below) is what Green articulates as Bonhoeffer's sense of humanity's relatedness to nature (198):

> Fundamentally Bonhoeffer's interpretation of humanity as lord of nature means that nature is a realm of human freedom, for the freedom of love is the essence of the divine nature of Christ. There is no divine or demonic substance in the world, so nature is neither to be worshipped nor feared. Humanity, therefore, is to live in nature as a natural realm, to be at home in the world as the environment of creativity, art, imagination, knowledge and work.

The reader of Green's thesis notes in this light that for Bonhoeffer, 'dominion' as lord over nature is to be interpreted as 'freedom for' and conceptually speaks less about exploitative mastery and more about responsible stewardship. The estrangement from God and nature, as well as from truth and liberation, which through the fall is brought to humankind's work, serves the more comprehensively to relate every question to the revelation in Christ. It is Green's observation that, consistent with his theology of sociality, Bonhoeffer understands both Christ and human beings from the standpoint of his comprehensive concept of 'person'. Because Christ is person, and encounters us in that word of address from another human person, in the sermon Word, revelation is both contingent (*extra nos*) and bound to human beings (*pro nobis*). Thus the Cross is the ultimate sign of Christ's being *pro nobis*. Green continues in this train of thought and argues that Bonhoeffer's consistent theological understanding of 'person' interprets progressively a sequence of philosophical terms in his anthropological repertoire: *Geist, Dasein* and then *Existenz*, and that this progression evidences an appropriation on Bonhoeffer's part of terminology from the growing existentialist movement. It leads Bonhoeffer to assert that 'How' questions are questions of cognitive reason, not questions of faith. In a memorable summary Green writes (226):

> The 'inordinate claim' of human reason encounters its *Grenze* in Christ as person, is ultimately compelled to ask 'who' Christ is, and finds the question returned to sender: now the question is 'Who am I as I am exposed and revealed in encounter with Christ?' The *Transcendenz* question becomes my *Existenz* question.

Green argues that Bonhoeffer's own answer to the 'who am I (in encounter with Christ)?' question underwent a significant shift between what Green calls the 'Power Christ' of *Nachfolge* and the radicalized *Theologia Crucis* of the prison letters. In this latter period Green sees Bonhoeffer's 'weak Christ as a polemic against the power God of religion'(271). He attributes this in no small measure to the influence of Wilhelm Dilthey, who provided Bonhoeffer with the

anthropological insight of '*Mündigkeit'* [Growing into maturity, my translation], which, according to Green, (citing Ernst Feil's 1969 thesis) caused Bonhoeffer to revise his Christology. But it is not just Bonhoeffer's Christology which was in transition: Green notes that Bonhoeffer had his first contacts with leaders of the resistance movement in February of 1938, and notes that the very first point of '*Christ, Reality and Good*' states that (307):

> anyone who wishes to engage in Christian ethical reflection must reject as irrelevant the usual questions about being good and doing good. Instead one must ask the utterly and totally different question 'What is the will of God?'

Green stresses that in re-imagining the starting point of ethical thinking in this way Bonhoeffer is shifting the question of goodness away from the human subject and onto God's reality and goodness, upon which it is premised. In so doing the way is opened to a different kind of behaviour from that which would normally be considered acceptable by Christian believers. In a further development of this thinking Bonhoeffer writes about the wartime use of (DBW 6: 298) 'killing, lying and expropriation solely in order to restore to their rightful place life truth and property', and Green comments (321); 'this was precisely the purpose of Bonhoeffer and his colleagues in the conspiracy'. In similar vein Green suggests that when Bonhoeffer is at his most specific concerning doing the will of God in Nazi Germany, his four major themes were: '*Stellvertretung'* [vicarious responsible action]; correspondence with reality; readiness in taking on guilt; and freedom (312). Significantly, he concludes in relation to Bonhoeffer that it is 'in the resistance movement (in which) Bonhoeffer entered into an authentic freedom for others' (257).
Given the focus of his thesis, it is self-evident to observe that its exposition leads Green to have much to say about Bonhoeffer's development of the concept of the mandates, including the mandate of work, and Green offers much that is most helpful.[7]

In summary, Green argues persuasively and compellingly that the key to a clearer understanding of Bonhoeffer is to see his life and work through the 'lens'of sociality. There is a small point on which I would take issue with Green. When he is discussing '*The Structure of Responsible Life*' he includes as part of a sentence the remark (321) 'after discussing some basic points about vocation'. It is disappointing here not only that Green uses this rather vague word vocation (as discussed later in this chapter in my 'Matters of Translation' section) but more troubling is that partly in conjunction with this unhelpful rendering of '*Beruf*' the deeper significance of work for Bonhoeffer is omitted and undervalued, especially since the subject of work seems to draw together so much of what Green has been writing about. This would appear to

[7] Bonhoeffer's concept of the mandates will be further discussed in chapter seven.

be part of a wider theological pattern, namely that of omitting the discussion of work as a theological theme, despite creating numerous openings which have in a sense 'begged the question'. It is perhaps time for this omission to be, at least in part, rectified.

André Dumas: Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality

A further example of a different hermeneutical key to understanding Bonhoeffer is provided by A. Dumas in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: Theologian of Reality* (1971). His writing on Bonhoeffer's theological method is captivating and merits citing at length (1971, 15):

> Bonhoeffer's work is fragmentary. It is influenced by the various events that stimulated, coloured and diversified it. It changes in feeling, according to urgency and moods. It invites interpretation. It tests out various hypotheses that are apparently contradictory. It is polyphonic, for it refuses to ignore things that cannot be reduced to systematic harmony or monotonous repetition. As we will see, Bonhoeffer's legacy is similar to such treasures: everyone works the vein that enriches his own understanding of issues … nevertheless, his books are tightly reasoned ... I would ... wager that Bonhoeffer, for whom things were so discontinuous and chopped up and whose theological life extended through the unbelievably quick changes in Germany between 1906 and 1945, had only one concern: to hold on to the world around him, since God is found in the concrete. This means making Christological reality the centre of one's very being, the place where God and the world are no longer strangers, in order to display that relationship 'without (metaphysical) separation or (immanentist) confusion' which is simply the application of the Chalcedonian formula about the person of Christ to reality.

This passage illustrates clearly the thesis of Dumas' book, that the hermeneutical key which Dumas sees as central to understanding Bonhoeffer is that of reality. It is also helpful in that it explains how more than one understanding of Bonhoeffer is, as it were, invited by the very nature of his writing, and that the 'vein that enriches a person's understanding' will be sure to differ. To my mind, Dumas really demonstrates a deep understanding of Bonhoeffer (although quite whether the 1971 publication's jacket claim that the book is 'already hailed as the classic interpretation of Bonhoeffer's thought' has stood the test of time or was ever accurate, is perhaps more open to discussion). The passage also raises the subject of 'avoiding metaphysical separation', a matter about which Dumas has much to say. He notes, initially, that for Bonhoeffer, or any thinker, the temptation, which may also be called a metaphysical temptation, is to divide existence into two worlds. At one end of the spectrum, in the Germany of the 1920s and 1930s, one might emphasise with Barth the God who is wholly 'other' and the primacy of God's saving act of grace which is

virtually independent of humankind. At the other, one might emphasise with Bultmann the primacy of humankind's act of faith which is virtually independent of God's reality. Dumas continues by pointing out that the characteristic of metaphysics is to create a division between appearance and reality (German: *sein* and *schein*), between living and believing, earth and heaven, this world and the beyond, and the natural and the supernatural. He notes that dualism is etymologically 'built-in' to metaphysics as the preposition 'meta' (beyond) carries great weight - even though initially it was only a way of classifying the place in Aristotle's works where his writings on 'first philosophy' followed those on 'physics' and nature. He concludes (112):

> So metaphysical transcendence becomes reflection on the above, the beyond, the within, or the other-worldly – all understood as some place other than the here and now. Seen in this way, metaphysical theology turns aside from understanding God in His incarnation and sets itself against the condescension and love of God towards an everyday world that metaphysics considers 'deceiving, misleading and evil'.

Dumas observes that the young Bonhoeffer, despite his respect for the theologian he would not meet in person until 1931, felt Barth's preaching of God as the 'totally other' ran the risk of precisely such metaphysical dualism, by placing God's claim outside the world. In similar vein, for Dumas, early and mid twentieth century use of words such as salvation and redemption often tended to imply that God saves us by extricating us from reality, a sense which is both gnostic and anti-biblical, and was not shared by Bonhoeffer. Dumas mentions the philosophical (and theological) circle par excellence: how can one think comprehensively and yet in thinking comprehensively not finally lose touch with reality, which is yet another limit to thought that thought itself cannot establish? He comments that 'Barth sees in this fatal egocentricity of philosophical thought a clear path of human sin: what is needed to break the circle is God's unique act of revelation'(21). Dumas argues that Bonhoeffer for his part sees the danger that theology can fall into, that of objective revelation, just as philosophy can fall into the egocentricity of transcendental reflection, and finds the safeguard against these dangers in his concept of reality [*Wirklichkeit*]. In a phrase which captures this sense and also provides an example of how Dumas constructs his thesis he writes (88):

> In theology there is a recognition that the very existence of the reality of the 'other' constitutes a barrier that reality cannot be understood without taking this barrier of the 'other' into account.

It is worth observing at this juncture, for comparative purposes, that Green in this same sentence would have traced the theme of sociality, or indeed, as we shall see below, that Nickson would find

confirmed here her notion which primarily sees Bonhoeffer's engagement with the concept of person through the motif of freedom. Dumas points out that Kant had on the one hand criticised the claim of metaphysical reason to discern the Absolute and thereby to claim some kind of control over Being, and on the other, he gave powerful reinforcement to metaphysics by his separation of the noumenal from the phenomenal, and by separating the thing-in-itself from humankind's experience of it. Dumas argues that Bonhoeffer sees the same process at work in theologians who stress God's transcendant act, for if they deny humankind the right to control an objectified God who they might 'grasp', they nevertheless re-inforce the division between the act of a God who is 'totally other' and humankind who lives in the everyday world. Dumas frames the question he sees Bonhoeffer asking as (112):

> Can this emphasis on act, helpful in describing God's intervention and summoning, take sufficient account of Christ present in the reality of this world? Is not the ecclesiology of such theologians based too much on the limits of God's grace and human faith, without giving sufficient attention to the accomplished work of the covenant and the incarnation?

In the light of these reservations expressed about the ecclesiology of theologians whose emphasis becomes unfocussed and too disconnected from reality, Dumas sees Bonhoeffer developing his own ecclesiology in contradistinction. This is consistent with Dumas' thesis which runs as a common thread throughout the whole of this work, that the notion of reality (155) 'stands for the abolition of life in two spheres'. Dumas writes that for Bonhoeffer (156):

> Jesus Christ does away with any metaphysical duality. He destroys the possibility of existence on two levels, or in two spheres, by the realisation of God in the world and the world in God. Jesus does away with the problem of boundaries between God and the world by structuring the world in the midst of the world rather than elsewhere ... with a kind of inspired logic Bonhoeffer continues 'A world which stands by itself, in isolation from the law of Christ, falls victim to licence and self-will. A Christianity which withdraws from the world falls victim to the unnatural and the irrational, to presumption and self-will'.

Thus for Bonhoeffer, the church is neither a religious society made up of individuals worried about "sociological self-affirmation' as Troelsch puts it', (91) a kind of intimate circle where people cultivate the memory of Jesus' personality, nor is it simply a John the Baptist preaching the event of the Word, a kind of scolding pulpit from which (à la early Barth) sin and salvation are proclaimed to the outside world; nor again is it a sacred institution, the holy and infallible mediator of salvation serving as the repository of grace (as in Roman Catholicism). Rather, in a

crystallisation of his thesis, Dumas stresses that for Bonhoeffer that the Church is far more. He writes (91 ff.):

> It is the realisation – fragmentary and hidden but also objective and empirical – of God's reunification of everyday life of the human community in Jesus Christ … according to Bonhoeffer's now classic phrase, the Church is the body of Christ as collective person 'Christ existing as the Church'… Church is thus at the heart of reality.

In equal contradistinction to a metaphysics giving 'insufficient attention' to reality as above, Dumas argues that for Bonhoeffer, an 'authentic' ontology tries to describe the openness of human reality to the question of being. Along the lines of his argument above, Dumas suggests that Bonhoeffer is articulating a transcendence which does not become dualistic and an ontology which does not become pantheistic. Such an ontology would (115):

> presuppose a Being already known as the presupposition of understanding in the pure act of humankind's 'grasping'. It would make clear that God does not encounter humankind only at his limit and theirs, but that He enables them to understand his reality in the midst of their reality, so that people may claim to exist 'before Christ' but also 'in Christ'.

Dumas goes on to argue, given how important 'knowing' is and remains to Bonhoeffer throughout his life, that at the time of writing *Akt und Sein* it is actually through the conceptual approach of ontology that he is describing the epistemology of the incarnation (although this would shift over the stages in the course of life). But despite the change that would subsequently occur, Dumas sees in Bonhoeffer's early writing a distinct continuity. Dumas writes (117):

> *Act and Being* puts us on the track of the one interpretation that provides a continuity in Bonhoeffer's work: Christ present in this world as the ontology of an incarnate transcendence.

Dumas suggests that the next step for Bonhoeffer is into a stage where his thinking adopts the conceptual approach of structuralism. Within this approach, broadly, Dumas argues that Bonhoeffer's *Nachfolge* and *Gemeinsames Leben* illustrate the approach to personal and communal reality that Bonhoeffer preached and experienced during the period 1933-1939. Using the motif of 'immediacy' Dumas notes that for the disciple (123) 'when the call sounds forth in reality, the field of possibilities is reduced to the immediacy of obedience. From abstract necessity reality becomes concrete freedom'. In his view this freedom found in obedience amounts to Jesus' re-uniting of divided reality around the structure of his call, in a blend of extraordinary visibility and hiddenness

(with Bonhoeffer's stress being placed, ultimately, more on the former). Dumas sees a consistent thread between the writings of 1932 and those of 1940, and goes to some lengths to substantiate his argument. Because of the relevance of this for what Dumas has to say about the mandates it is important to examine this in some detail. Dumas reflects that (143):

> In declaring Himself the partner and ally of humankind rather than of celestial hierarchies or cosmic powers, God chooses in the freedom of His love to grant a privilege to this world and to humankind in its midst, making humanity His sole partner at the heart of the whole creation, heavenly as well as earthly.

In view of the above, and in consistency with his thesis, Dumas says that for Bonhoeffer (150) 'the 'fall' ought really to be called the tearing apart, or de-structuring, of the reality given by God'. Humanity refuses to live in freedom-in-relationship, because humankind wants to become God, an omnipotent lord over things and creatures, without entering into relationship with them, with the consequence of ending up in isolation. This cataclysmic, sole-partner betrayal with its de-structuring outworking is only redeemed in and through Christ. In Dumas' words (153) 'the re-creation in Christ is the re-structuring of reality around him'. With the structure of reality centre stage for humankind, the very notion of a 'beginning' is something humanity cannot think about and therefore cannot talk about. Dumas continues (145):

> As Hegel saw clearly, if philosophy wants to be more than a Kantian critique, it must begin by 'arbitrarily enthroning reason' which would also entail the impossible claim that reason and creation were contemporaneous events.

In this light Dumas continues further to wonder whether for Bonhoeffer the title 'Genesis' fails adequately to describe the creative and sustaining work of God in the midst of reality. His point is that it does not make us witnesses of what 'preceded the beginning' but rather of what is accomplished in creation when God creates and when in the midst of our daily existence we place ourselves in an awareness of what He has done. In being in an awareness of divine structure Dumas anticipates what he will articulate as Bonhoeffer's basis for the mandates when he writes (146):

> Thus the aim of the creation stories is not to satisfy our curiosity about beginnings and endings, but rather to help us understand and be obedient to the structure and shape of the world around us. Much contemporary philosophy asserts that being is based on nothingness: but such a claim seems to establish humankind as the true creator of values, opposing the creativity of her nothingness to the opacity and massivity of being. But

> theology does not accept this creative intrusion of nothingness between God and humanity as redounding to humankind's favour. It sees nothingness as part of the very inwardness of God's free act, both affirmed and negated by it.

It is in this becoming obedient to the structure and shape of the world around us that Dumas sees two things at work: he argues that Bonhoeffer could have written *Ethics* immediately after 1932, that it follows straight on from *Creation and Fall*, but also that it is at this latter time when the better descriptor for the overall conceptual approach Bonhoeffer adopts, instead of structuralism, becomes that of reality. Dumas' view is that the common thread that unites the whole of *Ethics* is Bonhoeffer's search for the concrete character of the divine commandment, which might perhaps better be described as its 'realisation'. For Dumas, the meaning of *Ethics* for Bonhoeffer has as much, or more, to do with designating the recognition of reality re-unified by God's commandment as it does with the dilemmas of conscience in the knowledge of good and evil. This re-unified reality is grounded in Israel's God who (143):

> is not the God of the dead but of the living, located not beyond the world but in its midst. He cannot properly be associated with either other-worldly transcendence or this-worldly immanence. He is the Creator of the one as well as of the other, of heaven as well as earth, neither of which can contain Him.

The freedom of God Himself is thus at the heart of created reality, and in the structure of being 'free for the other' God can be truly seen. Freedom-as-relationship is, in Dumas' view, for Bonhoeffer, the other side of necessity, which is not a (148) 'structure opposing it but reality still waiting for the image of the One who has created it with, and for, freedom. In Bonhoeffer's commentary on creation, God's uncreated (eternal/divine) freedom 'enters the world through humankind who bears God's image' (148). Dumas argues that this is what Bonhoeffer in 1931 meant by 'mandate', the concept which he further developed in *Ethics* (149ff.):

> A mandate is not an initial or impersonal 'order of creation' that has remained unaffected by human development and has served either as the criterion for natural goodness or as a means of holding a sinful world together. Rather, a mandate is a structure in the 'middle' of earthly reality that summons the human will and shows it right here and now what the Creator demands of His creatures. To recognise a structure and to obey a mandate are one and the same thing … as the personalised etymology of the word suggests, (mandates) are not institutions in themselves but vocations from God that take the concrete form of earthly demands that have the force of divine commandments ... the divine mandates express the

> ethics of an ontology of reality based on Christology. They manifest Christ existing in the world in the form of community and commandment.

Dumas sees Bonhoeffer's concept of the mandates as one of three attempts in *Ethics* to recognise how God's presence in reality can be considered: the other two being the structure of responsible life, and the relationship between the ultimate and the penultimate. In his prison writings, in the essay "The structure of responsible life", Dumas notes that Bonhoeffer would further add to these categories (albeit with overlap) those of correspondence with reality, vicarious responsible action, and the acceptance of guilt and freedom. It is also helpful to make the link between reality and freedom and the centrality of freedom within the concept of the mandates, as freedom is the third and final possible hermeneutical key towards understanding Bonhoeffer which we will examine below.

Thus in summary, Dumas' articulation of 'reality' as the hermeneutical key for a fuller understanding of Bonhoeffer, a theologian whose constant source of examples is the non-religious world, is insightfully crafted, thoughtfully argued, and deeply helpful. Like Green, Dumas clearly makes a deep connection with Bonhoeffer's thought, yet omits any mention of work. Given the profound nature of Dumas' insights, this omission seems a lost opportunity. Also, in an example where 'reality' is open to question, Dumas makes a valid and at one level innocuous link between Bonhoeffer and Heidegger. But such a link, given Dumas' thesis, is provocative. Heidegger's premise was that in fact the philosopher is not one who reflects on the world but one who is in the world. Yet Heidegger as of 1933 openly supported the Nazi party, betrayed Jewish colleagues to the regime, and remained silent on the subject post-1945, despite his proximity to resistance via his close friendship with Ernst Jünger, the author of *Storm of Steel*, who was actively in touch with the resistance, and present in Paris, in the key period of late June 1944. Therefore Heidegger presents us with a problem. Steiner writes (1978, 23):

> Heidegger's career, with its rootedness in one place, with its almost total refusal, certainly after February 1934, of external eventuality or contingency, poses and exemplifies the very rare, indeed troubling case of a human existence invested wholly in abstract thought.

In terms of how thought informed life, clearly the divergence between how Bonhoeffer and Heidegger respectively viewed, and engaged with, reality could not have been more profound. So profound indeed, that the question raises itself as to whether Bonhoeffer and Heidegger inhabited different versions of reality. 'Our reality is Adolf Hitler' was Heidegger's choice. Heidegger's version of reality helped him survive the war, with no sign of subsequent penitence, and Bonhoeffer's did not. The comparison with Bonhoeffer does not turn out well for Heidegger.

Ann Nickson: Bonhoeffer on Freedom

For her part, Ann Nickson in *Bonhoeffer on Freedom* (2002) argues that no previous Bonhoeffer scholarship has done justice to the motif of freedom. Nickson notes the discontinuity between the rhetoric of freedom adopted by the Nazi party and the actual erosion of individual and collective freedoms brought about by their regime and (like Dumas) argues that for Bonhoeffer, who spent the latter part of his short life behind prison bars, freedom exists 'not in hovering between possibilities but in courageously grasping reality (DBW 8: 571)'. Nickson's thesis is that for Bonhoeffer the relationship between divine and human freedom is at the heart of every discussion. It is the free choice of the living God to bind God's self to historical human beings which provides the best evidence for, and description of, divine freedom. For Nickson, what Bonhoeffer sees, beyond this, is that it is precisely because God is not humanity writ large but because He is creator and Lord that human beings are free fully to become themselves, and it is God's freedom which operates as the catalyst for, and sustainer of, human freedom. Thus true human freedom is the free gift of participation in the divine freedom. In a way that, remarkably, draws together much of what both Green and Dumas have argued, but also re-focusses the issues around the motif of freedom, she writes (2002, 28-29):

> Only the free and contingent revelation of God breaking in from the outside can place human beings into reality and free them from self-enclosed isolation. As divine freedom and transcendence is understood relationally as freedom for the world, so human epistemological transcendence is a freedom in sociality and responsibility and a freedom for the other.

Standing at the centre of the debate here is the divine freedom as 'freedom-for', as opposed to a human 'freedom-from'. God is free, and because there is no separation between His being and His act He always acts in freedom. But God's free action is never a freedom in and for Himself but rather it is relational: it is a freedom for the world. Nickson, to an extent echoing Dumas, summarises what in her view Bonhoeffer is expressing (57):

> In the language of the Bible, freedom is not something that people have for themselves but something they have for others (DBWE 3: 62). Freedom is a relationship and as such can never be understood in individualistic terms, as my isolated freedom to express myself or to make choices, but must always be understood in social, relational and hence ethical terms. Being free means'being-free-for-the-other' because I am bound to the other. Only by being in relation with the other am I free' (DBWE 3: 63).

Nickson continues along this path (with reference to DBWE 2: 90-91) writing (29): 'For Bonhoeffer, it is God's revelation of himself in Christ which must subvert and define all our categories'. Thus because what most clearly manifests God's freedom is this binding of Himself to human beings, God's freedom is here defined not abstractly in terms of what might be possible for God, but concretely as encountered in His revelation in Christ, in the church. Nickson argues further that by the time Bonhoeffer writes *Creation and Fall* it is striking how for him it is freedom that lies at the heart of such foundational themes as (49) 'creation and preservation, sin, incarnation, redemption and indeed the doctrine of God itself'. Nickson argues, along the same lines, that the heart of Bonhoeffer's exposition in this work is encapsulated in the idea that God is the one who creates in freedom: her emphasis is that for Bonhoeffer, God *creates* in freedom, and that God creates *in freedom* (52). The fact that the heavens and the earth are brought into being by God's command, a command which is free, *Gott spricht*, (God says, God speaks, not in a remote transcendence but in a paradoxical unity of transcendence and immanence) means that God creates in complete freedom: and even in creating, God remains wholly free vis-à-vis what is created. Nickson is clear that for Bonhoeffer, God and his creation remain distinct in their freedom, and adduces Rowan Williams in support of this view, suggesting that this is perhaps Bonhoeffer's deepest conviction (60, cit. Williams, 1991):

> Williams asserts that the very grammar of talking about God is in danger of becoming meaningless once this distinction is no longer maintained. 'Isn't the difference of God and creature the mark of the freedom of the creator's love and isn't that ultimately the only thing worth affirming about the grammar of God?'

Nickson is further able to turn an additional insight from Rowan Williams on Bonhoeffer to her theme, the comment that Bonhoeffer is not out to make religious language easier, but more difficult. She achieves this by observing the insight in Bonhoeffer's later writings that (162) 'religious language has ceased to be authentic language about God and so has ceased to set people free'. That such a thing (as Williams's comment) could be true of so engaged a communicator as Bonhoeffer is somewhat of a paradox, but the same could also be said of other freedom-related insights about Bonhoeffer which Nickson brings. Two examples (others could be cited) further illustrate this: Nickson writes about Bonhoeffer's concept of God being humankind's 'limiting centre' and traces throughout his corpus the thought that (67) 'in recognising God as our limit, humanity is free'. Second, freedom is by its nature something that cannot be demanded; Nickson reminds us that for Bonhoeffer, history has amply demonstrated, almost as an unwritten law, that the quest for freedom leads only to enslavement. Yet despite these challenges, there is a compelling logic at work. Nickson sees that for Bonhoeffer, because freedom is the defining

characteristic of human creation in God's image, the corresponding *quid pro quo* is that, accordingly, redemption thus becomes understandable as the restoration of that freedom.

Thus in summary, Nickson's thesis is clearly articulated and plausibly argued. It ends, fittingly, with a helpful and thematically-focussed discussion of the poem 'Stations on the road to freedom', the accompanying and illustrative translation of which, sadly, has been omitted from the text. Her consistent use of German is apposite and informative, and the employment of the original language terms to illustrate further depths of meaning is consistently helpful. For example, when she makes the valid point that (56):

> God's word is never some impersonal creative power but always personal address - address requires response and responsibility - the word lies wholly and freely at the disposal of the one who speaks.

It is helpful that Nickson includes the German words at this point (German *Wort, Antwort* and *Verantwortung*) to show the cognate connection. My own observation here is that what Bonhoeffer is talking about in terms of an appropriate response to a relational God could equally be articulated as *Berufung, Beruf*, and (the title of my 7th chapter) *Beruf ist Verantwortung*. I refer more fully to the additional cognate connection which Bonhoeffer makes in this respect in chapter 7.

Finally, there is one further relevant issue arising from Nickson's thesis, namely with respect to her statement (145): 'It is in responsibility that both freedom and responsibility are realised. To act responsibly means to live in the tension between freedom and obedience'.

It strikes me that this somewhat unclear statement could be more fruitfully re-worded by substituting what I argue is Bonhoeffer's own understanding of responsibility, namely, work, for the first instance of its usage here. So a modified statement could read (145, my inserted changes in italics): 'It is in *work* that both freedom and responsibility are realised. To *work* responsibly means to live *fruitfully* in the tension between freedom and obedience'.

It is through the Cross that God sets us free to live and work in a godless world, whether we be in prison or otherwise. Too often, we have forgotten the work aspect. Bonhoeffer, for his part, did not, as this thesis will further demonstrate.

Summary

This section has laid out in some detail three differing possible interpretative keys towards understanding Bonhoeffer, and in so doing the fruitfulness of reading Bonhoeffer via an integrating theme has become readily apparent. It has also emerged that there is considerable overlap between each of the three, and it has even been possible, on more than one occasion, to see how a valid

point made about Bonhoeffer could equally have been made via the 'lens' of a different hermeneutical perspective. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that all three writers do not specifically name, or engage with, the subject of work. It has also been noted how important the theme of the mandates is and that it has its roots in Bonhoeffer's earliest days: this subject is directly relevant to the theme of work and will be further addressed in chapter 7. It has also been helpful to trace in particular how a combination of the three 'keys' examined here, sociality, reality and freedom, when embraced and further examined, raises the possibility that something which has been missing in Bonhoeffer scholarship until now is a fuller understanding of work, both within Bonhoeffer's writing itself and as a part of his own 'work journey' as he develops his own theology of work. Of course, because this thinking has until now been under-explored, Bonhoeffer himself has been the less fully understood, and hence the purpose of this thesis as a whole is to bring fresh light to bear on this subject.

1.4 Matters of Translation

On the subject of work, there has been a history of inadequate rendition in some aspects of Bonhoeffer translation, nearly all of which has now been corrected, but even in the new DBWE series, there are some limiting choices which have been made and a small number of these may reduce to some extent the full impact of what Bonhoeffer has to say about work. Indeed, this (historical) issue may also have played some role in helping to limit the full impact of Bonhoeffer's contribution in this area of thought, particularly in the reception in the English-speaking world of what is perhaps Bonhoeffer's best-known publication *Discipleship*. This problem will be addressed here by using my own translations for some key phrases relating to the subject of work.[8] As an example of the point at issue here, a relevant passage for this thesis as a whole comes in DBW 4: 35 (emphasis added):

> Luther's path from the monastery back to the world meant the sharpest attack that had been launched on the world since early Christianity ... this time the attack was a frontal assault (S. Kierkegaard). Following Jesus now had to be lived out in the midst of the world
> ... Complete obedience to Jesus' commandments had to be carried out in the daily world of work (*im täglichen Berufsleben*) … this deepened the conflict between the life of the Christian and the life of the world in an unforeseeable way ... it was hand-to-hand combat. Luther's deed cannot be misunderstood more grievously than by thinking that through discovering the gospel of pure grace, Luther proclaimed a dispensation from obeying Jesus' commandments in the world. The Reformation's main discovery would then be the

[8] Bonhoeffer himself was deeply conscious of the challenges involved in translation and wrote, memorably, on the subject that (DBW 14: 417) 'translation is the first and necessary prior form of 'making present' [*Vergegenwärtigung*].

> sanctification and justification of the world by grace's forgiving power. For Luther, on the contrary, a Christian's *secular vocation* (*weltlicher Beruf*) is justified only in that one's protest against the world is thereby most sharply expressed. A Christian's *secular vocation* (*weltlicher Beruf*) receives new recognition from the gospel only to the extent that it is carried on while following Jesus.

The translation issue here in focus, highlighted by my use of italics, is the following: in my view, '*daily world of work*' as a rendering of *täglichen Berufsleben* is excellent, and a welcome step forward compared to previous renderings. It would have been desirable that this same insightfulness had also extended to '*weltlicher Beruf*'. However, unfortunately, the choice was made in this instance to render *weltlicher Beruf* as *'secular vocation'* which is not ideal, for a number of reasons. From a German standpoint, the word '*Beruf*' may mean quite a number of different things in English. One of these is 'profession' but in its general sense in English it has a close proximity to 'occupation' which means that as a potential translation for *Beruf* it is in too narrow a register. The translators are well aware of this and sometimes use 'job' for *Beruf* which is most welcome (for example DBW 4: 215) and also use 'condition' when appropriate (DBW 4: 253). There are of course different meanings in different contexts: for example, a German speaker might well be asked in a social context '*Was ist Ihr Beruf*?' This they would understand as 'What do you do for a living?' (Literally, 'what is your profession?' only that in English one would not ask that!) Indeed, in my own chapter 7 entitled '*Beruf is Verantwortung'* I shall argue that Bonhoeffer simply means 'work is responsibility'. This is inadequate, of course, and will not do as a one-size-fits-all solution,but it is intentionally provocative, in order to recapture at least here some of the territory that has been lost to everyday work as a result of this linguistic compromise. That this is necessary is due in part to the issues outlined above and also in part to the fact that from an English standpoint, there is a problem with the word 'vocation'. As a translation of the Latin '*vocatio*' it is suitable, but in contemporary usage it has become an overly narrow word form, and, more significantly, has in current usage some rather unhelpful associations with more altruistic, generally less well remunerated, or even 'religious' professions (which some might describe as callings). Miroslav Volf, writing in *Work in the Spirit*, makes this point about the subject of work and the word 'vocation' (1991, vii):

> A dynamic society requires a dynamic (not static, theological) understanding of work. It was clear to me that the dead hand of 'vocation' needed to be lifted from the Christian idea of work. It is both inapplicable to modern societies and theologically inadequate.

It is a problem that here in DBW 4, too often the word *Beruf* has been rendered 'vocation'. To demonstrate the inappropriateness of this I would argue that people in the workaday world of today

do not talk about having vocations to be bankers or buyers (professions Bonhoeffer specifically and repeatedly mentions in separate but analogous contexts), and in fact that if such a claim were made, it would be an object of some derision, partly in view of the vastly more favourable remuneration levels associated with these industry sectors; but of course, these roles are clearly part of the everyday world of work. Thus in the passage above, a more faithful rendition for what Bonhoeffer is generally meaning when he uses the word *Beruf* would be either the word 'work' or some phrase associated with everyday work in the world. Consequently throughout the thesis as a whole I will often use 'work' or 'vocational work' as a translation for *Beruf* as opposed to 'vocation'.

Furthermore (and there has been much discussion about this next point), I suggest that it is for similar reasons not ideal here to overuse the rendition 'secular' as a translation for *'weltlich'*. This is partly because Bonhoeffer indicated in the instance above (as well as, for example, DBW 4:152) that what he means is 'daily', but primarily because the word 'secular' is a word which takes much of its primary definition in current usage from expressions such as the phrase the 'sacred/secular divide'. Accordingly, the semantic range encompassed by the word is somewhat narrow, and (worse) too narrowly religious. It is a convenient shorthand for the faith community, but is on balance unhelpfully alienating for those not yet remotely aware of, or interested in, faith. In short, the word 'secular' is esoteric and belongs to a narrower, faith-orientated community: a religious word. (Ken Costa's comments on the false division of the sacred and the secular are apposite on this matter, cf. *God at work*, 2013: 25-26). The irony is poignant here: this is the very problem Bonhoeffer is addressing in his text, yet this problem is in fact exacerbated by the translation. Bonhoeffer's Christology, particularly in relation to *Nachfolge*, centred on there being one reality, not two (DBW 6: 32). Opting for the choice of 'secular' here works unintentionally against the theological pulse of that thinking. A happier choice, and in my view one which better picks up the sense of where Bonhoeffer was heading, for *weltlicher Beruf,* is '*everyday work in the world*'.

So the second problem is that the editors of the DBWE series at times find a less helpful nuance and have made the decision to use the word 'secular' when 'everyday' would have been in many instances a preferable choice. For example, if 'everyday' is substituted in the place of 'secular', the following passage, in my view, reads better (DBWE 4: 5 my italics):

> Bonhoeffer's logic is disarming in its simplicity: "The command, 'you shall not kill' and the word, 'love your enemy,' are given to us simply to obey." The implication of these remarks is clear. One *does not separate Jesus' commands from one's everyday life* – an insistence that will be made even more forcefully in his later writings.

The net result of the small number of work-related non-ideal translation choices made in the current DBWE 4 volume is a decided loss of the full equivalent impact upon the reader in English of the passage cited above as Bonhoeffer formulates it. Although this might seem a small issue, in fact, because of the importance of work to Bonhoeffer, the word *Beruf* appears frequently, as does the word *weltlich*, and the combination of the two is by no means isolated to a single instance. However, with my amendations, the tone and relevance of, for example, the original passage cited at the outset of this section is better attuned to Bonhoeffer's thought and makes much more accessible reading (DBW 4: 35):

> For Luther, on the contrary, a Christian's everyday work in the world is justified only in that one's protest against the world is thereby most sharply expressed. A Christian's everyday work in the world receives new recognition from the gospel only to the extent that it is carried on while following Jesus.

This is the voice of Bonhoeffer writing about work, virtually unknown to the English speaking reader. As this example cited here is a key passage for chapter 5 and serves as a representative instance of the improvement in clarity which can be gained by judicious deviation from the DBWE renderings both here and throughout the thesis as a whole, I will consistently use the DBWE translations where they are available, and where the particular German words appear which I have mentioned I shall use my own translations appropriately annotated.[9]

Summary

This introductory chapter has included four sections, comprising, first, a statement of the thesis. Second, the chapter summary has offered a brief overview of what each chapter will present and argue. Third, a careful discussion has examined the extent to which work has been present or absent as a theme in previous Bonhoeffer scholarship. Finally a closing section entitled 'Matters of Translation' has highlighted some pertinent issues for the subject matter at hand and has indicated the chosen *modus operandi* in this area.

[9] Another word which has been used on occasion to translate '*Arbeit*' by the translators of the DBWE series is 'labor'. The current translators have wisely used it much less than earlier translators who had overly favoured its usage and in fact when the current series editors use it, it generally is right on target and a helpful and apposite alternative to using the word 'work'. There are, however, instances for the UK reader, where the American spelling is a disturbance and the word labor can detract from a fuller understanding of what Bonhoeffer is writing about when he uses the (much employed) word '*Arbeit*'.

Chapter 2: *The dehumanization of work*

This chapter will consider the dehumanizing of work in relation to the period between the 1920s and the mid 1940s, particularly in relation to the Nazi era in Germany. It is necessary to address this in a thesis on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his engagement with work because the thesis as a whole argues that a hermeneutical key to Bonhoeffer's life and theology which has hitherto been lacking is that of work. Accordingly this chapter will offer a degree of contextualization which sheds light on the dialogue into which he is entering and some of the broader contemporary issues in which Bonhoeffer played a part. Having established a context, the study as a whole will examine Bonhoeffer's family background and his Lutheran heritage. In this way it will then be possible to trace diachronically in Bonhoeffer's own writings not only the significance of the subject for Bonhoeffer but also the thread of how his own thinking on work, and his relationship to it, developed over the course of his life.

The willing workers of Germany's IG Farben and the betrayal of work

Opening the 1947 prosecution in Nuremberg against the twenty-three conservatively dressed defendants from IG Farben, then the fourth largest company in the world, General Telford Taylor charged that the defendants'collaboration with the arrogant and supremely criminal adventure of the Nazi apparatus was so close that without it, 'Hitler and his Party followers would never have been able to seize and consolidate their power in Germany, and the Third Reich would never have dared to plunge into war' (Jeffreys, 2008, 8).

In his 2008 publication *Hell's Cartel* Diarmuid Jeffreys charts the extraordinary story of the eager and willing complicity of giant industrial group IG Farben in the most appalling crimes against humanity, and with it the corruption of work which that entails. Much has been written of the crisis of capitalism, but far less on the betrayal of work itself. An aim of this thesis is to address in part - ultimately in dialogue with Bonhoeffer - this latter subject, of which the example here serves as a *cause célèbre* in a wider and as yet largely unwritten modern theological analysis of work. Work is the place, to a huge extent, where identity is shaped, where money is distributed, and the sphere in relation to which ethical and life choices come into the sharpest focus. It is, for many, the place above all where meaning and purpose are located. Our relationship to work is at the very centre of life itself, and a failure to think theologically about work, and re-shape life accordingly, entails the widest of consequences, as this study will show. The 1930s betrayal of work itself represents a crisis of just this magnitude. It is important too, to note that the case of IG Farben is not an isolated instance. There were many instances of substantial and influential

German workplace support for the progress of the NSDAP. For example, Fest (1973, 358) records that on January 4th 1932, at a crucial hour for the Nazi party, when their financial predicament was catastrophic, and a party tax adviser stated that the party could pay its taxes only by relinquishing its independence, Hitler met with Kurt von Schröder[10], the president of the Cologne Bank *Herrenklub*, under conditions of extreme secrecy. Within days Goebbels noted that the financial position has 'improved very suddenly', and that the party was once again (358) 'sitting pretty'. The industrialist Thyssen spoke of a 'number of sizeable contributions' that 'flowed from sources in heavy industry into the treasuries of the NSDAP'[*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*][National Socialist German Workers' Party](358). On another occasion, on February 20th 1933, a group which brought together von Schröder and Georg von Schnitzler, head of the all-important commercial committee at IG Farben, as well as 'other representatives of heavy industry, mining and banking, delivered an instant 3 million marks to an 'election fund' for Hitler, possibly more' (Fest, 394). It is fair to say that to the extent that German society at large bought in to all that Nazism represented - for example, as evidenced by Robert Gellately, in *Backing Hitler · Consent and Coercion in Nazi Germany* (2001) - so too did the rank and file and the influential within the German workplace provide open and often unfettered support for their new masters.

The dramatic prosecution statement, with which this chapter opened, was based on a detailed knowledge of the IG Farben company, whose range of tens of thousands of products included'pharmaceuticals, intermediate chemicals, dyestuffs, explosives, camera film, fertilisers, light metals, fuels, plastics, rayon, synthetic rubber, magnetic recording tape, paints, pesticides, light bulbs, auto tyres, detergents and cleaning products, poison gases, and much, much more'(Jeffreys, 7). Its employees comprised some of the most distinguished scientists and industrialists in the world, winners of Nobel prizes and pioneers of Aspirin and many other essential drugs, whose expertise across this broad range of products was the envy of the world. Throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s the Company had one product in particular which was under development, but which required an unsustainable level of investment, the synthetic rubber product called Buna. Time and again senior management had been on the verge of pulling the plug to this (seemingly) endlessly costly pipe-dream of an idea, together with its cost-overrunning manufacturing site at Leuna, only for it to be rescued from the brink by the adept maneouverings of Carl Bosch, whose pet concept it had always been. Then came the era of Nazism and an unprecedented enthusiasm for German self-sufficiency, and the willingness of the new Government procurement system to place substantial orders, thus providing an unassailable commercial logic. So, for example, secure in the knowledge that the synthetic oil was also fully suitable for conversion into a high-octane aviation product, the new Reich government signed with

[10] Not to be confused with Baron Bruno Schröder, senior partner of the family bank of the same name, who had no truck with the Nazis once they came to power and literally one day threw the German ambassador to London Joachim von Ribbentrop out of his office (Clements, *Bonhoeffer and Britain*, 2006, 29).

IG Farben as early as 14th December 1933 a ground-breaking agreement known as the *Benzinvertrag* [Fuel Agreement], whereby the company agreed to raise production to 350,000 tons per year by 1935, and in exchange, the Reich agreed to buy all the factory's output that could not be sold on the open market, and gave a 10-year price guarantee corresponding to production costs, plus a sum amounting to a 5% ROI (return on investment) on the initial IGF outlay (Jeffreys, 163). Faced with the business case attractiveness of such a commercial agreement, IGF was not slow to lay to one side any scruples it may have had about dealing very closely with this new government. Indeed, alongside the commitment to producing customer orders what soon came with the package was a wholesale buying in to the expansionist/dominationist and dehumanising agenda of the Nazi regime. There is a sense that in the making of this very transition something catastrophic happened, or was irretrievably lost from view. Ultimately, on 12th April 1941, gleeful at the prospect of a labour force so cheap as to have to be working under conditions that were palpably inhuman, and a new Auschwitz Buna factory so large it would consume as much power as the entire city of Berlin, Otto Ambros would write to a fellow member of the IG *Vorstand*: (Jeffreys, 45) 'Our new friendship with the SS is proving very beneficial'. From this it is only a short step to the final stage of involvement and to the portrayal of the IG Farben Company as so far along the road to perdition for the situation to be irretrievable, as captured by an employee (Jeffreys, 247):

> Men ran and fell, were kicked and shot. Wild-eyed *kapos* drove their bloodstained path through rucks of prisoners, while SS men shot from the hip, like television cowboys who had strayed somehow into a grotesque, endless horror film; and adding a ghastly note of incongruity to the bedlam were groups of quiet men in impeccable civilian clothes, picking their way through corpses they did not want to see, measuring timbers with bright yellow folding rules, making neat little notes in black leather books, oblivious to the blood bath. They never spoke to the workers, those men in the grey suits.

What concerns us here is less the well-documented saga of the camps and more, the quiet men in civilian clothes, and the whole premise of an industrial giant whose impeccably clothed employees were working in adjacent and compromised circumstances to wholesale brutality and slaughter in order to earn a salary and improve process efficiency, acting throughout with a range of vision so selective as to be not only incongruous, but also grotesque. The question about work which this study raises is 'Where was the integrity in this? The men who had the 'bright yellow folding rules, making neat little notes' seem a ghastly caricature of the once proud German worker captured by David Crew, a pride exemplified amply in books and illustrated magazines of the inter-war period, where one could find such statements as (1994, 80):

> Is there a more diligent, more apt, more dextrous, better trained, more reliable, more productive but also better paid worker than the German? Who keeps his workplace, his machine and his tools cleaner than the German? I state explicitly his workplace his machine because the German worker loves his labour and takes good care of his equipment, as if it were his own personal property. In no way does he feel himself to be a slave to mechanised production, no, he is the master of the machine.

The question arises: how could anyone have gone along with such an up-ending of all that was good in German work? What was it in those workers that had led to such a betrayal of work itself? In the case of the *kapos*, the absence of a theological and moral compass in the workplace is shown to be determinative. The IG Farben workers captured in this report appear to demonstrate the very reverse of the mastery alluded to above. Far from the thinking that the dignity of work was rescued from the limitations of mechanised production by a conscienciousness and pride in work that liberated the above-all *German* worker[11], what we see in the Auschwitz Buna factory worker is a treble slavery, comprising the lowest employees, the brutal higher employees, and the enslaving 'system' itself, which was the corporate willingness supplied by IG Farben. The company did not merely collaborate with an evil regime, but was energetic in initiating evil. IG Farben developed and mass produced the *Zyklon B* gas used in the camps; the gruesome medical experiments of Josef Mengele were financed by IG Farben, with employees raising, signing and sending regular cheques; the company bartered with the SS to lower procurement costs ('shipments') of prisoners who would all be killed in ghastly experiments; another long-term IG employee, also an SS Doctor Helmuth Vetter (later executed for crimes against humanity) conducted research on two hundred female prisoners, injecting them with streptoccocus bacilli to test the effectiveness of new drugs being developed by the IG Farben pharmaceutical division. All of them died. He wrote: 'I feel like I am in paradise' (Jeffreys, 278).

Arbeit Macht Frei – a gigantic lie

How could this happen? How could a company that apparently represented the best of the workplace values and achievements of the civilised world continue to operate with such warped vision as effectively to be in a different version of reality? One possiblility (which will not be developed here) is that the work had become inhuman precisely by focussing on its technical requirements whilst at the same time choosing to ignore its human costs. Another (related to this) is that a different set of values became so inflated in relation to other s normally prevalent that work effectively happened in a moral vacuum.Norman Davies (1996, 948) lists 18 aspects of

[11] Noting that the related ideological pre-supposition of German racial supremacy was itself a part of the absence of the moral compass alluded to.

totalitarianism, and concludes by coining the expression '*Moral Nihilism*'. It is a phrase which is beguiling in its accuracy and poignant in its inadequacy, leaving much to be addressed. For example, the Nazi party clearly attached great value to loyalty, particularly loyalty to itself and to Hitler, which does not necessarily need to have been nihilistic. Some of the complexity of this subject is captured by Fest (1974, 377) as he writes:

> The radicality that constituted the true nature of NS (National Socialism) does not really spring from the license it offered to instinctual gratification. The problem was not one of criminal impulses but of a perverted moral energy. Those to whom Nazism chiefly appealed were people with a strong but directionless craving for morality. In the SS, NS trained this type and organised it into an elite corps. The 'inner values' that were perpetually being preached within this secular monastic order – the theme of many an evening meeting complete with romantic torchlight – included, according to the prescript of Heinrich Himmler, the following virtues: loyalty, honesty, obedience, hardness, decency, poverty and bravery. But all these virtues were detached from any comprehensive frame of reference and directed entirely towards the purposes of the regime. Under the commands of such imperatives a type of person was trained who demanded 'cold, in fact, stony, attitudes' of himself, as one of them wrote, and had 'ceased to have human feelings'. Out of this harshness towards himself he derived the justification for harshness towards others. The ability to walk over dead bodies was literally demanded of him: and before that could be developed, his own self had to be deadened ... the moral imperative was supplemented and crowned by the idea of a special mission: the sense of taking part in an apocalyptic confrontation, of obeying a'higher law', of being the agent of an ideal. Images and slogans were made to seem like metaphysical commandments and a special consecration was conferred upon relentlessness.

Thus 'Moral Nihilism' can be seen to be an un-nuanced expression which at first glance may seem adequate for describing the two most significant totalitarian leaders of the last century, but which, on reflection, falls short, and would fail to account, if asked, for the motives and thinking behind the actions of IG Farben workers and their like. We are back to the motif of integrity. Of equal and devastating poignancy is the fact that it was the Nazi regime which in enslaving millions of workers, caused the very gates of the '*Konzentrationslager'* (*KZ*'s) they populated to be emblazoned with the inscription *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work makes you free). Nietzsche's cynical remark (Davies, 1996, 779) 'Work is the most efficient form of policing' blended imperceptibly with Hitler's mixed admiration for Stalin to give rise to this phrase, perhaps inspired by the *Vorkuta*. This was Europe's most extensive complex of concentration camps, the 2,000 'facilities' of the Soviet Gulags, where so many of the 50 millions killed by Stalin perished, and the entrance

gates to Kolyma in north eastern Siberia were surmounted by the ironic slogan (Davies, 963): 'Labour is a matter of honour, courage and heroism'.

This study will argue that the German experience, amounting to the betrayal and dehumanisation of work, contributed to and expressed a moral and theological crisis, the extent of which was at the time only sensed by a few individuals, whose number included Bonhoeffer.

The Jungle: politics and the work-related motif of brutality in the 1920s and early 1930s

In order to grasp some of the background of events and thought processes which led to the *kapo* scenario described above and to begin to fathom what may have contributed to the crisis, it is helpful to go back to the work context of the 1920s and early 30s to sketch something of the mindset people had in relation to work, and through that context further to illustrate the grounds for my contention.

The immediate aftermath of World War I was a time of turbulence and contrasts. It was an era of discontent and disaffection, interspersed not least with a certain harking back to pre-war lifestyles. A. Taylor has captured a sense of this in *Europe, Grandeur and Decline* (1967, 332):

> The year 1923 was post-war in feeling as well as in time. 'Post-war' excused every evil. Unemployment was 'post-war': sexual immorality was 'post-war': discontent in Asia was 'post-war'. In reality the 'normalcy' demanded was a romantic version of the days before 1914 when capitalist economies and Christian morals had supposedly worked without a flaw.

With the cessation of hostilities, high unemployment continued to be the single dominant issue throughout Europe, not least among war veterans, especially the wounded. Mark Mazower writes (1998, 80) that of the 500,000 war widows in Germany after 1918, most would never re-marry and with bleak prevailing employment prospects for women, these women faced circumstances of extreme economic hardship. Evans (2003, 110) reports that in the light of food shortages and unemployment, a huge wave of crime swept the country: so desperate were the poor even in 1921 that a Social Democratic Newspaper reported (Evans, 110) that 'of 100 men sent to Berlin's Plötzensee prison, 80 had no socks on, 60 were without shoes and 50 did not even have a shirt on their back'. Across Europe, hope was hard to come by.'One of the rosy hopes'notes Mowat, (1955, 23) 'for the postwar world was that there would be an increase in the opportunities for women in industry and in the higher positions in business'. But progress came slowly. In Britain, for example, women aged 30 or above were granted the right to vote in 1918, but it would be a further ten years before women aged 21 could vote. On the overall economic situation, Mazower (1998, 106) writes:

> Europe's economic life was in chaos: in Poland, four currencies were in use simultaneously: by the summer of 1922 the Austrian Crown stood at 83,600 to the US$. The Greek government pioneered a new approach to taxation by calling in all banknotes, cutting them in half, and returning only half to their original owners.

In Germany, faced with an impossibly large reparations burden, the government was unwilling to take measures which might increase unemployment, so opted for the strategy of printing staggering amounts of extra money. The consequence became hyper-inflation: by January 1922, the cost of living was twenty times what it had been in 1914. Diarmuid Jeffreys writes (2008, 95ff.):

> By the summer of 1923, the mark was worth one five hundred billionth of its value in 1918, workers were famously using wheelbarrows to cart their daily wages to the bank…and householders were paying off their mortgages for less than the price of a bottle of aspirin. Suicide became increasingly common amongst the middle classes.

The memory of the darkness of the days of hyperinflation would last a long time in the hearts and minds of the German people, and equally, the long term effects of devastating levels of unemployment were incalculable. It was only a relatively short time since the industrial revolution, with the fundamental shift from a primarily agricultural European economy to an industrial, town-based way of life, and a workplace outside the home, and the barrenness of modern, unemployed existence felt more akin to an existential betrayal. The new 'home' life without a source of income was unbearably, intolerably bleak. Commenting on this period, Arndt (1944, 250) observes that unemployment was:

> a social even more than an economic evil. Its effects in terms of personal insecurity, maldistribution of income, and the deterioration of health, technical skill and morale were probably greater than the waste of resources and potential wealth it involved.

As with the hardships deriving from the lack of work, life itself was difficult. Hardship was not only socio-economic: life itself could be shortened by an unexpected threat. Between 1918 and 1920 a vast external menace raged across the world in the shape of the '*Spanische Grippe*', an influenza of a fatal virulence unprecented since the middle ages, its victims far outnumbering even the colossal casualties of the war, with the death toll estimated (Pugh, 2008, 6) at around 26 million. In this context governments of Europe hastened to pass legislation criminalising abortion as their respective electorates continued to associate national self-esteem with on-going population growth, with a watchful eye on whether or not that growth was being achieved largely or in part

through international labour mobility. It was true that across the world, work was hard to come by, and that at the same time, working conditions for the majority were often unwholesome. In America, the success in 1906 of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* had brought about rapid legislative changes in the meat industry, contributing to a wider consciousness of conditions in the workplace, and also indirectly to the growth of Trade Unionism. In terms of this work context, a story from 1923 is illustrative, as it captures a sense of some of the prevailing currents of thoughts and fears, amidst the beginnings of a civil liberties framework: (www.genordell.com/stores/spirit/UptonSinclair.htm, 9.6.2014):

> Upton (Sinclair) had asked the City of Los Angeles to allow a public meeting at the harbor, where 600 dockworkers on strike had been jailed; he was refused permission. On 15 May 1923, Upton climbed up 'Liberty Hill' above San Pedro Harbor, and began reading the Bill of Rights to the assembled crowd; the police chief arrested him. Upton's brother-in-law began to read from the Declaration of Independence; he was arrested. A third man was also arrested; a fourth man arose and commented on the weather, for which he too was arrested. Local officials held the four *incommunicado* for 18 hours, then tried to rush court proceedings and deny the men bail. But somebody tipped off Upton's lawyer, who arranged their release. A week later, Upton again climbed Liberty Hill and spoke before a crowd of 5,000; he was not arrested. That same day, the citizens of Los Angeles formed the Southern California branch of the American Civil Liberties Union. The next day, all but 28 of the 600 striking dockworkers were released from jail; charges against Upton and his fellows were quietly dropped.

Despair, hope and the search for someone to blame

In this climate, - albeit conscious that the birth of the civil liberties movement was a step forward for humankind - countries around the world, with the United States leading the way, were easily able to discern a possible link between the growth of Trade Unionism, Socialism, and the dangers inherent in allowing 'foreign' workers to take work away from their own citizens. Consequently, around the world, the barriers went up to foreign workers. But even in situations where there were limited numbers of immigrants, the workplace was often largely a combative environment, a struggle between worker and employer. Political activists were keen to exploit these tensions, which often developed a whole life of their own. For example, Harris (2003, 239) recounts that one Richard Krebs joined the Communist Party in May 1923 and led the abortive Hamburg revolution that October. His account makes a connection between the moral and theological dimension to work, unemployment and justice, and captures succinctly some of the swirling political and workplace tensions of the hour:

> I had a keen one-sided sense of justice which carried me away into an insane hatred of those I thought responsible for mass suffering and oppression. Policemen were enemies. God was a lie, invented by the rich to make the poor be content with their yoke, and only cowards resorted to prayer. Every employer was a hyena in human form, malevolent, eternally gluttonous, disloyal and pitiless.

In terms of contributing towards the subsequent betrayal of work itself, the 'us and them' mentality fuelled by politically influenced behaviour evidenced here by Krebs is informative. Whilst Krebs was thus engaged tackling evil employers, others were at work manipulating the political situation with no less malevolence, but in somewhat subtler fashions. Newspapers played a substantial role in shaping the political landscape. Coal mining, as an industry that employed millions in the harshest of workplace circumstances, was always a safe bet for the arousing of strong emotions, and Alfred Rosenberg knew what he was doing when he wrote in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, on 29.3.1922 (Kele, 1972, 49):

> Therefore, all that the German worker hauls out of the dark coal mines, that he produces in the sooty machine shops and at the ship yards: this does not benefit him and his (family) but will be passed on for arbitrary distribution to a dozen great bankers in Paris, London and New York. Four fifths of the product of German labour is spent on payments to international high finance.[12]

Across the developed world, people struggled to reconcile what had been the prevailing remnant of belief in the progress of humankind with the contradictory evidence of the Great War, and the search was on for someone to blame. Here again, we find evidence of a divisiveness, which, when extrapolated and legitimised, was to prove fatal. The seeds for a crisis as deep for everyday workers as it was for the intellectuals, the crisis of existentialism, were being sown. Young people blamed the older generation. George Orwell (1937, 129) captured a prevailing sentiment:

> Those years during and just after the war throughout almost the whole nation there was running a wave of revolutionary feeling ... it was a revolt of youth against age, resulting directly from the war. The old had behaved in a way horrible to contemplate: they had been sternly patriotic in safe places while their sons went down like swathes of hay before the German machine-guns ... everyone was in a bad temper with his elders, in a curious cult of hatred of 'old men'.

[12] Replacing 'high finance' with 'Jewry' would soon prove an easy step.

In such an environment, capitalism itself, ably represented by the large banks, seemed a suitable target for much of the blame, and socialist thinking was quick to point to a basic belief that capitalism would invariably self-destruct, paving the way for revolution and a new and better socialist world. In this atmosphere of transiency, moral standards were re-visited, and re-evaluated, with sexual reticence coming to be increasingly scoffed at. DH Lawrence achieved success as a writer, breaking new ground in this respect. People became fascinated with technology, which seemed to represent progress after all, and hence offer at least some avenue of hope. It was as if, in the face of the available and disappointing evidence as to the progress of humanity, positive signs seemed to have a wider significance, and needed re-inforcing as such. So, for example, some areas of life flourished: in 1920 the company Marconi began wireless broadcasting and in Britain the BBC was formed in 1922. Mowat (1955, 241) comments: 'The programmes which were broadcast tremendously enlarged the musical public and concert-going increased'. There was overall population growth, not decline: despite the losses of The Great War, during the period 1911-1931 the population of Great Britain grew from 40.3 million to 44.8 million, as people re-established lives and found meaning in marriage and parenting. Life expectancy was on the up, and grew (for boys) from 40.4 years in 1871 to 58.7 years in 1931 (Mowat, 1955, 512). In terms of how people lived and public perceptions were shaped, the emergence of film and other media is informative: in 1928, for example, Warner Brothers issued the first talking picture and 1929 witnessed the 14th appearance of the Encyclopedia Britannica. There was talk and evidence of progress, but it was an open question as to whether the new technologies would be used to shape the world for good or evil.

Racial ideology and the blame game

In this highly-charged charged environment the signals from the workplace continued to be ambiguous. For example, there was an appetite for all things scientific, and in this context, pseudo-science flourished: as early as 1900, industrialist Alfred Krupp had awarded first prize in a national competition to William Schallmeyer, author of an essay advocating a eugenic approach to social policy, the Racial Hygiene Society being founded in Germany in 1905 (Evans, 2003, 35). The thinking which lay behind eugenics was a world-wide phenomenon, which saw the creation of professorial chairs and other roles in this discipline as far apart as Germany, Russia and University College London. Undoubtedly this corrupted thinking played a part in the deeper crisis of the coming years, showing how prevailing and fashionable thought patterns, once allowed to corrupt the workplace, can have the most far-reaching consequences. It remains an open question as to whether such patterns were a contributory source towards or a connected outcome of Germany's moral decline in this time period. In Germany, by 1920, two respected experts, lawyer Karl

Binding and forensic psychiatrist Alfred Hoche had gone far beyond calling for compulsory sterilization in a short book in which they infamously coined the phrase ‘unworthy of life’, proposing that (Evans, 145):

> what they called 'ballast existences', people who were nothing but a burden on the community, should simply be killed. Since the incurably ill and the mentally retarded were costing millions of marks and taking up thousands of much-needed hospital beds, they argued, doctors should be allowed to put them to death.

Germany was just one among many countries where the thinking that led to eugenics would flourish. The US was another country at the forefront of negative eugenics; by 1921, in a trend continuing and flourishing throughout the war years and continuing well beyond them, 2,333 people had been legally sterilised without their consent (Mazower, 98). In 1923, organizers founded the American Eugenics Society, and it quickly grew (www.pbs.org/wgbh/aso/databank/entries/dh23eu.html, 9.6.2014) to 29 chapters around the country. Gellately (2001, 94) reports that in the US of the 1930s there were between 2000 - 4000 compulsory sterilizations per annum and that a 1937 Fortune Magazine poll showed 66% of US citizens as being in favour of the compulsory sterilization of criminals. In Britain in October 1931 the BBC invited ten speakers to ruminate in front of a microphone on ‘What I would do with the world’. Out of the ten speakers, three advocated eugenics (Gardiner, 2010, 212). In the absence of a valid moral and theological compass in the workplace, the so-called science of eugenics was a tangible representation of a wolf in sheep's clothing, and was readily blended by Nazi adherents into a package that would make a substantive contribution to the betrayal of work itself. Perhaps particularly in Germany, there was a ‘gap in the market’ for right thinking about social order, and there were plenty of people, many of dubious integrity, who were offering to step into the gap. Hitler was not in any sense an isolated voice when he wrote in 1928 in *Mein Kampf* (1943, 145, my translation):

> A stronger race will drive the weaker out of the way [*verjagen*] since the drive for life in its final form will rip away every ridiculous restraining device of the so-called ‘humaneness of the individual’ in order to make way for the humaneness of nature itself, which destroys the weak to grant pride of place to the strong.

In an unpublished note from around the same period Hitler expanded on the connected thinking about the weaker and the stronger (Sacks, 2011, 120):

> While nature allows only the few most healthy and resistant out of a large number to survive in the struggle for life, people restrict the number of births and then try to keep alive what has been born without consideration of its real value and inner merit. Humaneness is therefore only the slave of weakness and thereby in truth the most cruel destroyer of human existence.

The point here is less that Hitler's statements are chilling evidence of how he had imbibed ideas and attitudes from all around him, from Fichte through Nietzsche and Hegel to Frege, Schopenhauer and Heidegger, and more that ideas such as these were widely shared among intellectuals at the time.

The Great Depression: economic meltdown: the search for 'whom to blame' intensifies

At the political level, a similar degree of misplaced enthusiasm for prevailing ideas applied at the level of Economic Strategy. On April 28th 1925, Winston Churchill as Chancellor of the exchequer, announced in his budget speech the immediate return of Great Britain to the Gold Standard at the pre-war parity (Maberler, 1976, 3). Its rapid unworkability would testify to the turbulence of the times and to the fact that so much had changed: the world could never be the same again. Long-held tensions between workers and employers exploded into the General Strike of 1926: the stakes were so high, it seemed democracy itself was at stake. K. Laybourn (1993, 15) comments: 'Employers were determined to reduce monetary wages: Government policy was geared towards confrontation with the trades unions'. Writing an article in *The Times* (7.4.1927) entitled "The human side in Industry" Robert Hyde of the Industrial Welfare Society commented that during a recent visit to America he had:

> consistently endeavoured to combat the prevailing impression that the British industrial field was the scene of constant warfare and that a spirit of animosity characterised the relationship between employer and employed.

Perhaps one reason for wishing to refute the Americans' acquired impression was that it had a high degree of accuracy, and that it could only be a relationship of animosity, given the unaddressed and unresolved injustices of the workplace, and the looming moral and theological crisis which would soon burst out into an open sore. A sense of the degradation of humanity and the harshness of the hour for those looking for work is captured in a section from N. Gray's *The Worst of Times - an Oral History of the Great Depression* which is worth quoting at length. He writes (1985, 184):

> The queues were so long that signing-on days were reduced to one. Every entrance was guarded by two policemen and every grille around the counters was covered by brown paper. The only contact we had with the clerk was to look through the small slot and say 'No work'. Then we signed the book he pushed under the grille. A prominent businessman stated that most of the unemployed should be put aboard ship, taken out to sea and the captain given orders to pull the plug out. How the captain was going to get back he didn't say. For nearly 5 months I remained unemployed - then I received a letter telling me to report to the Poor Law offices for a Means Test. Three poorly dressed men and two women were seated on a wooden bench in a passage facing the Means Test door. One by one they went in each one re-appearing with a worried and distressed look upon their face. One man turned to me and said 'They're a bright lot of bastards in there. They'll give you nothing'. I was called in and entered the room. Facing me was a horseshoe table with nine men sat around it. The clerk placed a chair for me to sit facing the tribunal. The chairman said 'You've been unemployed so long it has been decided your unemployment money will be reduced by 2 shillings from next week'. The clerk came forward to take my chair away. The interview was at an end. One Friday in late September I arrived home with my dole to find my mother-in-law helping my wife to pack her bags. At the station my wife wished me a fond farewell and whispered 'We'll be back together again as soon as you get a job'.

The Depression that arrived in 1929 was Great in the overwhelming sense that the war had been. Gray (1985, 32) records: 'In 1929 South Wales hit rock bottom. The giant steelworks at Dowlais shut down: 12,000 men out, all in one day'. Mabereler (1976, 9) reports that:

> In several waves of panic - October 1930, March 1931, September 1931 and March 1933 - thousands of banks suspended operations - over 9,000 out of 24,700 banks in existence at the beginning of 1930 had failed by the end of 1933.

Across the world, productivity plummeted: between 1929 and 1932, industrial output fell by 28% in France, 33% in Italy, by 36% in Czechoslovakia, and in Germany by 46%, leaving (Mazower, 1998, 115) 6 million unemployed. The prevailing assumption in much of the world was that the capitalist system was irretrievably doomed to collapse, and that its replacement by some form of collectivist economy was inescapable. Lord Pakenham (1953, 66) reports of his fiancée Elisabeth Harman's time amongst the Workers Educational Associates Organisation that: 'Many of her pupils were unemployed, some had industrial diseases, all were emphatic in their denunciation of the capitalist system and all its works'. People sensed that the short-term future held potential for much change, and although a stint in Moscow may have cured Malcolm Muggeridge (1967, 15) of

his assumptions as to the promise of that system, many looked to Communism as a viable alternative. Even Communism seemed attractive by comparison with the bleak workless realities of the Depression. Margaret Cole (Gardiner, 2010, 216) commented:

> We were eager to follow the gleam: the hopes for what the Revolution set out to achieve compared to the dead hopelessness of breadlines and the dole were more than enough to outweigh doubts.

In the Soviet Union, Stalin himself, consolidating his unbridled power at the latter end of the 20s, was quick to seize the moment. In 1929 the OGPU's (the Joint State Political Directorate, precursor of the notorious NKVD) concentration camps were re-named labour camps, and given an explicit economic function. Between 1928 and 1932, the urban labour force increased from 11.3 million to 22.8 million, an unparalleled success. By 1934 Stalin, having liquidated the vast majority of the entire 'kulak' class of society in the meanwhile, could boast (Mazower, 1998, 124): 'the country in which Marxism has triumphed is now the only country in the world that knows no crises and no unemployment'. In these days of radical alternatives, when all things bourgeois were sneered at, Stalin was brutal, but the impression of that behaviour was somehow mitigated by the brutality of life at the time and the brutality of what long-term unemployment brought with it. In Germany, Ericksen (1985, 2) comments, in a way which speaks powerfully at so many levels of people's emotions:

> The German people widely perceived the period of the Weimar Republic to be one of crisis. Because this crisis was perceived to be severe, a mood of panic underlay political attitudes, and radical, less-than-perfect solutions were readily accepted.

In the Germany of 1932, a sense of hopelessness prevailed. Suicide rates in 1932 were nearly four times higher than those in Great Britain at that time and double what they were in the USA. (Gellately, 2001, 10). Anything seemed better than the current grim realities. The psychological impact of a nation's becoming willing to accept the hitherto unacceptable as a compromise cannot be underestimated. Brutality would emerge as an acceptable way of life, endorsed at the highest level.

The effects of the Depression: the work-related emergence of brutality as a motif

In general terms, but also in relation to this underlying sense, the workplace itself was brutal. Gray notes (1985, 27): 'a man only had to raise his voice in protest and he was a marked man, sacked at the first opportunity'. Living conditions, for the majority, were severe: Joseph

Farrington, living in Manchester in 1932, remembers (Gray, 18) he had no shoes to go to school, with six inches of frozen snow on the ground. Ben Hur reports, on the nature of living conditions (Gray, 24):

> The house we lived in was full of bugs and vermin. No matter what you did, you could not shift them. I was full of bug bites. All ten of us slept in the front room in a row and this bug used to wake us up regular as clockwork.

Gray (188) mentions a macabre joke doing the rounds at the time which tells of a man drowning in a canal. A passer-by asks where the man works. He leaves him to drown and runs to the workplace. He tells the gaffer that one of the men has drowned and can he have his job. The gaffer says 'Nay lad. The man who pushed him in has got it'. It was an era where brutality was simply a part of life. Women were not exempted. Gray (107) writes of an employer in North Shields by the name of Haggie's Ropery, making thick rope hawsers for the ships, which employed 99% women:

> If a man had to go to work there, he'd be terrified. These women were practically dehumanised because of the conditions they lived under and worked under. They'd strip him and probably rupture him through their frolicking.

Governments, too, in this work context, were brutal. In the case of the British Government, Pugh's comment (2008, 103) is that:

> Brutality seemed to enjoy official sanction in the violent Foreign Policy pursued by the government in India, Egypt, Iraq, Russia, and above all Ireland. The notorious Amritsar massacre of 1919, when 400 Indians were shot on the order of General Reginald Dyer, provoked dismay and controversy. Winston Churchill denounced his action as 'absolutely foreign to the British way of doing things' but others argued that Dyer had simply 'nipped a revolution in the bud by prompt action'.

The ambivalent disconnectedness of the current new modernity - vapid and directionless

Governments, generally, did what they could, in the darkest of hours, with whatever mandates they had from their respective electorates. It became apparent that with the breakdown of the old economic order, previously represented *de facto* by the gold standard, there was no immediate alternative emerging to take its place. Countries turned inwards and concentrated on internal problems and domestic solutions. The US introduced the Smoot-Hawley import tariffs, making life nigh on impossible for would-be exporters to the US market. But life had to go on. As

an example of this, it was the case that a flutter on the side provided what seemed like hope and even meaning for many. Organised gambling, in the context of the direst deprivation, and all too often amidst those with least financial resources, achieved the status of a major industry. Football pools flourished: in 1931, in the UK, 18 million people (Mowat, 1955, 245) attended Greyhound racetracks. Cinema-going, and motoring, became a way of life: by 1934 cinema attendances were running at 903 million per annum, and growing, and in 1935 there were (Gardiner, 659, 682) 350,000 people experiencing the new-found joys of becoming motorists. Retail sales of cars, ever more attractively priced, were booming, with AA membership (Gardiner, 244) reaching 600,000 by 1937. Life was fragmented, a misery for many, a good life for those who were in the right sort of work. Employment or its absence was almost all-defining. Since prices fell faster than wages in Britain, the real value of wages, for the employed, increased: on one calculation, (Pugh, 96) by 17% between 1924 and 1935, 'thereby allowing a sense of prosperity to take some of the edge off social discontent' (Pugh, 96). In 1931, whilst an across the board pay cut of 10% was announced for teachers, police, and armed forces, (Gardiner, 150) 70,000 people went on a cruise. Yet by 1937, in a curious analogy with the contemporary situation of some 70+ years later, this number had risen (Gardiner, 615) to 550,000. Given that the armed services represented (despite the risks) the advantage of steady employment, in these conditions applications were experienced at such a level that in 1934 the British Army in fact felt able to reject (Gray, 1944, 199) a staggering 66% of applicants, on medical grounds. The divides were keenly felt. JB Priestley' s *English Journey* of 1934, found four Englands in the 1930s (Mowat, 1955, 481):

> 1.) The old England of the Southern Counties and guide books. 2.) The 19th Century England of the Industrial North, country of coal tips and silent blast furnaces and 'thousands of rows of little houses all alike'. 3.) 20th Century England of the bustling home counties of by-passes and housing estates and suburban villas and cocktail bars gleaming with chromium trim. 4.) The England of the dole. Sad, unemployed Britain, only dimly known to many in the comfortable classes in the south.

In such schizophrenic disconnectedness, a sense of triviality and superficiality emerges, and for Pugh, (2008, 145) Noel Coward is the authentic voice of the inter-war period. The words spoken by the nightclub performer Fanny from the opening scene of his extravaganza *Cavalcade* (in which the decades from 1899 to 1929 are recounted) are poignant and speak clearly of what Gardiner (2010, 653) has called the 'vapid and directionless' nature of the times:

> In this strange illusion
> Chaos and confusion
> People seem to lose their way

> What is there to strive for?
> love or keep alive for?

Coward was not the only one in the entertainment business whose work asked audiences to go to a deeper level, touching profoundly on the themes of the alienation and the betrayal of work itself. Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film 'Modern Times' showed the alienation of modern humankind in the machine age, and opened with a scene in which a flock of sheep morphed into a hurrying crowd of workers. Disturbingly, the huge factory seemed to produce nothing, while turning its workers into mere appendages of the machines. In the film's most famous image, Chaplin is stretched round a giant cog wheel, part of the machinery he is servicing (Gardiner, 384). As a Jew, Chaplin was reviled by the Nazis, but the legacy and thoughtfulness of the contribution of his own work, as instanced here, far surpasses that of his revilers, further adding to the sense of a moral and theological crisis of the time, to which few were able to make a lasting positive contribution.

Despite all the challenges, of course, trade had to go on. International trade was hugely curtailed, but still of vital importance. In 1932, 81% of exports of British machine tools went to the Russian market, and 74% of Germany's exports of the same kind went there as well (Marberler, 38). Governments naturally wanted to export as much as possible and import as little as possible. Arndt (1944, 132) reports that the approach taken by the UK Government was devaluation, a common policy of 'cheap money' with interest rates at unprecedentedly low levels, and the adoption of a system of protection and Imperial Preference. Throughout the thirties in Britain, the unemployed marched on London, nearly always peacefully, and most memorably, from Jarrow. At one level, it seemed that the unemployed were, if out of sight, out of mind. But the unemployed were not entirely out of mind, as society started to redefine its power relationships with the advent of the new media: in this case, radio. The BBC commissioned a series designed to give a 'human face' to unemployment called 'Time to spare', starting its 17 talks in April 1934. By the 5th of June the Daily Herald commented: 'Time to spare is shattering too many illusions. Millions are being turned against the government,' and Sir John Reith, the Director General of the BBC was summoned to 10 Downing Street where Ramsay MacDonald told him the series could not continue. In a defining transaction for the BBC, and one which sets a marker which continues to be felt in our own generation, Reith recognised that the Government had the power to pull the programmes but told MacDonald that if this were done (Gardiner, 63):

> …there would be a 29 minute silence at the time they would have been broadcast, and it would be announced that this was because the Government had 'refused to allow the unemployed to express their views'.

The series continued.

The German workplace: ripe for exploitation

It was so important to get people working again, it seemed it mattered little what they were doing, as long as they were working. In this light, in Germany it did not prove difficult for the Hitler party to justify brutality against communists on whom it was easy to pin blame for lack of work. In 1931, on the 9th of August, five uniformed SA men in Potempa, in Upper Silesia, forced their way into the home of a communist worker, dragged him from his bed and trampled him to death before the eyes of his mother. On the 22nd of August, the five were condemned to death. On the 23rd of August, Hitler condemned this sentence as a 'monstrous blood-judgement', and said 'I feel committed to you with unbounded loyalty. It is our duty to fight a government under which this is possible' (Scholder, 1977, 181). At this point it became recognisable how the political climate of the time could justify even political murder, and how the adoption of the currency of brutality was in no small measure linked to the workplace. Within Germany, the NSDAP had for quite some time, not without justification, been profiling itself as the party of the workers. It was true both in terms of actual party membership and strategic in terms of positioning. Crew notes that (1994, 74):

> The Honour of Labour was a key point in Hitler's 1933 May Day Celebrations, an appeal to the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Loud applause can be heard on the tape recording when Hitler added that 'we want to lead everyone at least once in his life to manual labour'.

It is significant that the Nazi party had as its very name, 'workers' party', (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*) as they appealed to the working person and purported to represent the worker. Hitler himself had, unsurprisingly, always divided work along racial lines. Scholder captures this in a statement Hitler made as early as August 1920 (Scholder, 1977, 80):

> Aryanism means a moral conception of work and therefore that about which we talk so often today: socialism, civic spirit, public advantage before private advantage. Judaism means an egotistical concept of work and therefore mammonism and materialism - the complete opposite of socialism.

Mazower notes (1998, 133) that Goebbels declared 'Our socialism is a socialism of heroes', which implied (133) 'endless hymns to the worker: every dictator in Europe must at some time have posed as his country's First Peasant or First Worker', exactly as Hitler did (133):

> ‘I am a socialist’ Hitler stated ‘because it appears to me incomprehensible to nurse and handle a machine with care but to allow that most noble representative of labour, the people, to decay’. Posters emphasized craftsmen and artisans – a look backwards which perhaps helped draw labour away from its contemporary strong class connotations … even motorway workers – according to Nazi publicity brochures – were pictured above the caption ‘We plough the eternal earth’.

Such was the rhetoric. The reality, as Kele makes clear, was different (1972, 211):

> Although the Nazis would use the propaganda they had prepared since 1919 to flatter the workers in conjunction with the proclamation of the German labour front, this propaganda was offset by the reality of the suppression of the Trades Unions in May 1933. The victory of Nazism over its rivals for the support of the proletariat was completed with bludgeons and fists.

But the economic recovery strategy upon which the Nazis stumbled, proved, when blended with the particular nuances of their approach, to be a classic example of what Fest (1973, 410ff.) has identified as Hitler’s ‘keen tactical sense and sure feeling for tempo’ mixed with the ‘bureaucratic chaos’ of the regime. Because, for reasons already mentioned above, devaluation was a political impossibility, exchange control was the only measure left open to the Government. A situation thus forced upon Germany was, after 1933, developed into the pivotal instrument for the control of the whole economy. The methodology of ‘clearing’, described by Arndt (1944, 187) as ‘the most perfect form of barter trade’ grew gradually to the point where it became the framework of nearly 65% of Germany's foreign trade. A paragraph from his work is illuminative (1944, 191):

> In trade with other countries where imports were needed Germany had to resort to subsidies. During 1933/34 the funds for this process came almost entirely from windfall profits earned through repatriation of German bonds and scrip issue in lieu of debt repayment. The imposition of exchange control had naturally led to a fall in the prices of German bonds abroad. As early as 1932 the Reichsbank had taken advantage of this by permitting exporters to purchase these bonds at low prices and to use the profit from the resale in Germany to lower the prices of their exports, provided that the exports were ‘additional’. In 1933 this ingenious device was extended to debt payments, Germany permitting transfer of interest and amortization payments only at a discount (which her creditors were prepared to accept, rather than have their accounts frozen). Both methods amounted in effect to a concealed devaluation of the Mark, but, whereas an all-round

> devaluation would have raised the price of German imports, the cost was here, in effect, borne not by the German consumer but by Germany's creditors.

Using this and similar devices, the new government embarked on a work creation programme aimed at stimulating economic activity of any kind, and using every conceivable method of reducing the unemployment figures. Work, according to Crew, (1994, 75) was depicted as the:

> 'Battle of labour,' a struggle requiring obedience. The 'competition' inside the factory, among the workers, the work-teams, and even the struggle between factories was one form of this battle. But productive labour would also allow the economic independence which would bring victory to the Nazi state in the (international) struggle between peoples and races.

Life itself had been such a struggle in recent times that the climate was receptive to this language: people were hungry for change, and in Germany, they got it. Arndt (1944, 155) relates that:

> By the end of 1934 the Nazi government had spent at least 5 milliard RM on top of normal budget expenditure, more than half of which in the work creation programme of 1933-35 was spent on public works schemes for the construction of strategic motor roads, ordinary roads, public buildings, waterways, state railways, and land improvements.

Estimates state that the total amount borrowed by the government in order to finance all these public works from the banks between 1933-1938 was between (Arndt, 1944, 166) 13-15 milliard RM. Again, what is strikingly discernible is the full extent of the support of industry, first and foremost including the banking system, for the funding of Nazism. In the Germany of the 1930s workplace decisions supported what looked like a success. To add substance to intuition, while these bank-financed costs were in rapid growth, government income also soared, aided and abetted by vast amounts of revenue derived from schemes such as more or less 'voluntary' savings, 'voluntary' contributions to party and other purposes [*Winterhilfe*] and forced savings amounting practically to taxation, together with the greater yield of existing rates of taxation with growing money incomes. Arndt's conclusion is helpful (1944, 165):

> Nazi finance was neither miraculous (though ingenious) nor unsound. When Hitler proclaimed 'the primacy of work' he was expressing in a crude but effective slogan the principle which became the basis of Nazi economic policy. Broadly speaking, the Nazis in their expansionist recovery policy concentrated on the job of putting the unemployed back to work and left finance to look after itself.

Broadly speaking, it worked. Crew states that (1994, 4):

> The 'politics of the full wage packet' certainly did not convert every worker into a Hitler enthusiast. The Nazi economic 'miracle' did however convince many workers that things were getting better, especially as, for most of them, the point of reference was not the best years of the Weimar Republic but the most recent depths of the Depression.

As noted above, it was this sense of 'emergency measures', a sense of 'anything is better than nothing', deriving in great measure its gravitas and legitimacy from the work-related context, which enabled and fuelled so much of what was to transpire throughout Germany in the coming years.

Summary and Reflection

In summary, it has been possible to trace throughout these years of hardship and unemployment the sense of something emerging in relation to work which has roots in desperation, murderous selfishness and brutality. It has been further argued that there developed a work-related motif of brutality in the 1920s and early 1930s, and that the German context in particular proved ripe for exploitation. The chapter has traced the emergence of something of the sense of disconnectedness which so characterized what was then the new modernity. This sense, which would be orchestrated and exploited by the adherents of Nazism and its flawed value system, finally exploded into the sorts of events recounted at the start of this chapter and was expose something very deep and very raw in human nature. This chapter has argued that this process, which reached its abyss in the holocaust processes of 1942-1945, represents a moral and theological crisis, and is part of a wider and as yet largely unwritten modern theological analysis of work. This section has traced something of the context of a betrayal of work which has established connections that go disturbingly deep, and have ramifications for our relationship to work itself, even today. But some further questions have emerged in the process: if the larger context of work was so vapid, desperate and brutal, did that lead necessarily to the crisis? Or were there those whose internal navigation systems had sufficient integrity to be able to rise above the everyday? In his short but devastating work *Night* Elie Wiesel, a survivor of Auschwitz, makes a crucial link between all that happened there and the subject of responsibility. He writes (Wiesel, 2006, xv):

> Sometimes I am asked if I know 'the response to Auschwitz'. I answer that not only do I not know it, but that I don't know if a tragedy of this magnitude has a response. What I do know is that there is a 'response' in responsibility. When we speak of this era of evil and darkness, so close and yet so distant, 'responsibility' is the key word.

What will emerge in the course of the forthcoming chapters is how one person saw that responsibility taking shape in the increasingly dehumanised workplace, a workplace which, for him, became focussed around resistance to Hitler. Bonhoeffer was that person and this thesis explores how his own journey would develop in this respect.

Thus having established something of the work context into which Bonhoeffer speaks, the next chapter will consider selected aspects of Bonhoeffer's family background and also his Lutheran heritage. It will then become possible to trace diachronically in Bonhoeffer's own writings not only the significance of the subject for Bonhoeffer but also the thread of how his own thinking on work developed over the course of his life.

Chapter 3: *Gegen das Blut geht man halt nicht an*

The aim of this chapter, entitled '*Gegen das Blut geht man halt nicht an*' [You can't go against what's in your veins] (DBW10: 144) is to make clear the strong connections between Bonhoeffer's family background, in particular his Lutheran heritage, and his emerging theology of work in the period 1906-1927. From this section it will be possible to discern a pattern emerging whereby Bonhoeffer honours what he has absorbed from his heritage and moves on to integrate and incorporate this learning or information into whatever new circumstances he faced. The chapter will discuss *Sanctorum Communio (SC),* a study of sociality which rightly concerns itself with the acts of human will, and makes the point that it is (often) through work that its expression becomes concrete. A clear link will also be made between the fertile soil of *SC*'s expression of theological thinking and Bonhoeffer's later development of the concept of the mandates, and a short section will highlight the significance for Bonhoeffer's professional life of the influence of Georges Bernanos, thus establishing the central importance of work in Bonhoeffer's life and thought right from the earliest days, in line with the central claims of this thesis.

Work and the Family Home

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his twin sister Sabine, the sixth and seventh of eight children, were born on February 4th 1906 in the Silesian town of Breslau, a place within Poland now called Wrocław. R. Jenkins, writing in *Churchill* (2003, 121) informs the reader that it was just 5 months later that Winston Churchill would greatly enjoy travelling to Breslau and the attendant dressing up involved in attending German Army manoeuvres there at the invitation of Kaiser Wilhelm II. However, according to R. Evans (2003, 23) Breslau was a town noteworthy less for its chance association with future great national leaders but rather more for its four-fold increase in the ratio of mixed Jewish-Christian marriages in the period 1870-1915. Indeed, in a temporary adoption of that same language, acceptable at the time, Sabine's eventual marriage to Gerhard Leibholz was one that would be classified into that category. Accordingly the testimony of E. Bethge is significant: writing in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer - A Biography* (2000, 19) he recounts that once after Dietrich had attacked another, presumably Jewish, boy of his own age, the child's mother accused Dietrich and his household of anti-Semitism. His mother's comment that he 'could not have heard of such a thing in her house' has the ring of credibility, further attested to by the choices Bonhoeffer would make in his subsequent working life.

His father's work call to Germany's leading professorship of Neurology and Psychiatry soon took the family onwards to Berlin. The career of Bonhoeffer *père* was distinguished to the point where a Berlin Metro station was later named after the University Neurological Clinic where he was Director. It still bears that name today and continues to transmit the mixed message of a

legacy which has to contend in the current generation with where contemporary Germans stand today with respect to the previous century. Work, rest and play, in good measure, were all important in the Bonhoeffer household in the wider context of a total commitment to profession and related activities. Dietrich forged a relationship of lasting respect with his father and grew up home-schooled by his diligent mother (and multiple helpers) in a house where the man's job was self-evidently to work with an unstinting commitment to work itself. Happily it seems that commitment to work was not just theory: Bethge (2000, 14) notes about Professor Bonhoeffer's work as far back as 1898 that it was with 'mentally disturbed prisoners demonstrating a degenerative psychosis' and (without making the link with work which I am making here) that at one time Dietrich's elder sister Ursula was (Bethge, 19) 'sent for weeks to the home of the family's sick former maid, whose husband was a drinker, to help out with the household'. Something of the level of Bonhoeffer *père*'s approach to work can be clearly discerned in the letter written by Dietrich's mother Paula to her son at a much later date and in desperate times: on 11.8.43, after Dietrich's arrest in April, she wrote (DBW 8:132): 'Your father will not disengage himself from his work despite his being 75 years old'.

Play was important in this household but it had to know its place – the family were regular ski-ers, good at tennis, and fortunate enough to have a regular holiday home in various locations, including latterly one in the Harz mountains, Friedrichsbrunn, to which they would escape with what to the modern reader seems an enviable freedom and regularity – but what really counted was 'what you do'. Stephen Plant's observation captures this point succinctly: writing in *Bonhoeffer* (2004, 15) he notes: 'Dietrich's brothers prepared for careers in science and law; his sisters married similarly solid professionals'. Musical giftedness and similar or related accomplishments, despite being taken very seriously,[13] along with the relatively effortless acquisition of languages, were nice to have, especially if they happened to be professionally useful, but fitted more into the background 'wallpaper' of what it was to be a well-rounded young German in that walk of life. Knowing something of this helps us to understand a little better how much was going on for Bonhoeffer when, as a clear introvert, (but one determined to prove himself to his siblings) he wrote at length auto-biographically about a 'classroom moment' for a young adult embarrassed by acknowledging publicly for the first time his sense of rightness (he used the word *Beruf* in its strongest sense as 'call' here) about studying theology (DBW 11: 373):

> God, say if I take you seriously, don't destroy me in this moment, if I tell a lie, or punish them all, they are my enemies, and thine, they don't believe me, I know it myself, I am not good, but know that myself and you, too, Lord …. God I am with you - are you hearing me or not ? Who am I talking to then? Who's talking then? My vanity. God I want to study theology. (He pulls himself back from this reflection on hearing the teacher's voice and

[13] A story generally assumed to relate to this point is told in DBW 7:85.

translates the Greek text to his usual faultless standard). Next morning he had lain awake all night for the first time.

Bonhoeffer wrote these words in 1932 but was looking back at himself as at the age of 14. Fitting as this does into the context of a family whose engagement with an active Christian faith in the sphere of Church attendance was modest, (cf. Plant, 2004, 15) it is fair to trace a note of hesitation about how well this choice of profession will go down with those whose affirmation, at one level, he most needed. At another level, it affirmed what he felt at that time was an intensely private choice which he simply did not need. It is true that the family home was a believing home - for example, although hardly attending regular Church services, the family had the tradition of reading aloud the Scriptures at Christmas. They also had, according to the Editors' note in DBW 14: 922, a custom to celebrate the transition into the New Year by reading Psalm 90 - a Psalm which touches deeply on the theme of work, and also concludes by asking God's blessing/prospering/furthering of our work.[14] So in family terms, despite the number of theologians in the wider family, and the encouragements of his uncle and godfather Hans von Hase, the stakes were high when vocational choices were under discussion, and especially Dietrich's particular choice. Naturally, he looked up to his older brother Karl-Friedrich, who in his chosen work sphere succeeded in no less a task than the splitting of the hydrogen atom and in 1930 at the very young age of 31 would be appointed to the position of Chair of Physics in Frankfurt. Dietrich's initial choice of vocation could hardly promise as much glamour – but it was his alone. He would later write (DBW 9: 55) 'From the time I was 12 it was clear to me that I would study theology'.

Outside the immediate family, encouragements towards the study of theology would not be slow in arriving. One came in 1921 when he was only 15, through his language teacher Richard Czeppan who wrote to Dietrich on 15.3.21 (DBW 9: 31) calling him an '*angehenden Theologen*' (a budding theologian). Many more were to follow. At this still impressionable stage for Dietrich it is perhaps significant that in 1922, when he was 16, his father role-modelled for him something of lasting value: being offered a significant career move upwards to a Chair in Munich, he declined it and put family priorities first. This was of itself nothing new: it fitted with the understanding (and limiting) of work that he had always demonstrated, arriving punctually at work at 8.30 and leaving at 1.30 for the blend of other responsibilities. The subsequent string of family weddings is testimony to the wisdom of this work- and life - related choice. But it was a backdrop of significance for Dietrich to whom family as well as work were a life-giving and non-negotiable priority. If we seek the roots of Bonhoeffer's exceptional insight and his life as a whole, it is important to recollect that whilst his commitment to honouring his family was life-long, these roots

[14] V.10 in the Luther Bible mentions '*Mühe und Arbeit*' and v.17 'Let the favour of the Lord our God be upon us: and prosper for us the work of our hands - O prosper the work of our hands!' in the Luther Bible is the phrase '*fördere das Werk unserer Hände*'.

are less discernible in the upper middle-class values of the wider band of German society to which he manifestly belonged and more to be found in his out-growing of the captivity of the clan. In fact this pattern of honouring and retaining, yet moving on, may also be applied to Bonhoeffer's deep relationship with Luther. A subsequent section of this chapter will explore how deeply Bonhoeffer was informed and guided by Luther throughout his life. Yet in the course of time, and particularly in the evolution of the doctrine of the mandates, Bonhoeffer honours what has gone before, and moves on with the insightful and related crafting of his own distinctive contribution.

With this sense of honouring in view, it can be observed how when Dietrich's work began to make the transition from being of intellectual stimulation and academic interest towards something that informed and shaped one's life and daily decision-making, he had a pattern of involving his family in the project. Three examples of this are illustrative: around the winter of 1924/5 when he came across Barth, he was sufficiently taken with the discovery for his mother actually to ask him to send her (Bethge, 73) a 'copy of the Barth book'. Also when he started more regular church attendance for the first time (this in the context of writing *Sanctorum Communio* between winter 1925 and mid 1927) at the end of 1925, he began working with a children's Sunday school group in Grunewald, where he quickly (Bethge, 92) persuaded his younger sister Susanna to join forces with him. At least he could play the caring elder brother role with one sibling! He was wrestling with the work issue of how practical acts of service and teaching should fit in with (or take precedence over) his theological existence. He wrote (Bethge, 93) at the time to his friend R.Widmann that 'the hardest theological pronouncements of Barth are worthless if they cannot be explained thoroughly to the children in Grunewald'. Thirdly, later in 1927, when he came across the works of Georges Bernanos, a moving and disturbing writer who touches most intimately on the theme of what it really means to work as a priest, he took the unusual step of sharing his discovery of this author with his father. (This engagement will be addressed more fully later in this chapter). The pattern of these involvements is instructive in our understanding of the rooted-in-family nature of Bonhoeffer's relationship with work and its theological implications.

It is hence unsurprising that there was also much family consultation about the choice of supervisor and subject for a doctoral thesis. Bonhoeffer's choice of Seeberg and what he called a 'half historical, half systematic' one prevailed. It also formed a clear expression of how he saw his work contribution taking shape and its future direction at the time of choosing.

Sanctorum Communio and Luther

Sanctorum Communio itself represents only a fraction of the theological thought and work which Bonhoeffer undertook during the years in which he was engaged in its production. His prolific output is shown below:

Bonhoeffer's main theological papers in the Berlin SC period in addition to SC June 1925 - May 1926				Key work passages	Some of Bonhoeffer's Sermons in Parish, and Childrens' work addresses, in preparation for participation in Practical Theology Seminars October 1925-May 1926		
DBW 9 ref	Supervisor (and grade, where noted)	Date	Title	DBW 9 reference	Date and place	Text and Title	DBW 9 reference
271-303	Holl (Excellent)	June 1925	**Luther's Reflections on his work in his later years**				
305-323	Seeberg (Satis)(An exercise in Barthianism) (Bethge's note)	July 1925	Can a distinction be drawn between a historical and a pneumatological interpretation of Scripture?				
325-335	Seeberg (Excellent)	Nov 1925	**Reason and Revelation in early Lutheran Dogmatics**		18.10.25 Stahnsdorfer Kirche	Luke 17, 7-10	485-491
336-354	Seeberg	Jan 1926	Church and Eschatology	493 Work and Freedom	Feb/March 1926	Address on the Ten Commandments	491-497
355-409	Holl (Good)	Feb 1926	**Luther's view of the Holy Spirit (based on later Luther 1535-45)**		March 1926	Address on the First Commandment	499-502
410-430	Holl (Seminar celebration)	May 1926	Joy in primitive Christianity, an attempted survey		March 1926	Address on Matthew 21, 28-31	502-510
431-440	Seeberg (Very good)	May 1926	**Teaching of *altlutherische* Dogmatics/Eschatology on life and death and last things**	510-516 'How shall we work?'	May 1926 Grünewald	Sermon on Psalm 127, 1	510-516

What can be seen readily from this table (which has my own title for the piece in DBW 9: 510-516) is how much of this time was taken up for Bonhoeffer by his further study of Luther, with ensuing written submissions. The Luther papers are presented in bold to make this point, although in fairness Luther is amply in evidence throughout. Both early and later Lutheran thought are engaged with in this period. The chart (by showing the chosen subjects in date order) also illustrates how the study of Luther was centre stage in inspiring and informing Bonhoeffer's early preaching. It also includes a column indicating the timing of some of the most significant theological thinking about work which was happening for Bonhoeffer at this time, and this will be addressed as this chapter develops. First, let us turn in the direction of Luther, beginning with his doctrine of the Estates.

Bonhoeffer's Lutheran roots: the depth of his conceptual wells

Luther's doctrine of the Estates is understood via a study of the many allusions he makes in the course of his voluminous writings to the subject. Broadly speaking, he describes three main stations, which he sets out as 'found in God's word and commandment', those of Clergy, [*Ecclesiasticus*], Marriage, [*Oeconomicus*], and Authority [*Politicus*]. Writing in *Luther's Works, American Edition,* (henceforth LW), he stated (*Word and Sacrament*, LW 37: 364):

> But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government.[15]

Here it is worth noting in conjunction with subsequent comment about interchangeability of terminology, that Luther uses '*Amt*' [office] quite freely as an alternative to *'Stand'* [station, or estate]. He mentions that these estates which are 'holy orders' and 'true religious institutions established by God' are 'found in God's word and commandment', which in turn grounds any authority he places in the estates, in Scripture and also in the related concept of 'God's commandment'. The question as to how God's concrete commandment is to be discerned is a broad one and relates to the widest scope of human life under God, but for example, in Luther's thinking about order, there exists, above all the three orders named here, the encompassing 'common order' of Christian love, in which acts of service to others are to be undertaken and carried out. Accordingly the reader understands that the concept of the estate is given by God so that we may understand order and service aright, but equally, that the undertaking of orderly works of service in a godly fashion is what counts. (For example, see *Sermons on the Gospel of St John*, LW 22: S.22: vii-95) The carrying out of these good works does not bring or earn salvation which is uniquely to be found through faith, by God's grace alone, but there is a certain holiness to such actions. Similarly, Luther divided up the world into those many who have not yet come to a saving faith in Christ, and those few who have: Luther makes a further distinction, namely that as part of the imprint of God on the whole of society, the orders themselves, despite being indwelt mostly by unbelievers, confer a degree of holiness (cf. *Selected Psalms II*, LW 13: 71ff.). But, consistently, he insisted that holiness does not bring salvation, and a full and true holiness is there only when the believer (from within or without the estates) carries out good works from a place of being saved and conscious of the grace of salvation through Christ. Bonhoeffer drew out this clear understanding of what this means for our work, as Luther sees it, in his submission to Holl in mid 1925 (cf. DBW 9: 285). He would pick up this theme in one of his assessed sermons later that year, in the autumn of 1925. His choice of phraseology also reflects the pattern of honouring which this chapter is highlighting (DBW 9: 489):

> The first thing we must say to God before all else is 'Lord, we are unworthy servants'. Without this insight into this most serious situation in which we humans find ourselves in relation to God, there can be no conversation with God. Being Christian means to struggle for the honour of God, to work and yet to understand clearly that it is only God who can complete the work. To explain this away would be blasphemy, because this is the way God

[15] Luther does not always name the "orders," i.e. the basic social units, in just this fashion. Cf. *Large Catechism*, Fourth Commandment, 158, and Melanchthon's *Augsburg Confession*, Art. XVI.

> intended it to be. We should work and battle in gratitude for God's honour, not for our own perfection and blessedness.

Hence Luther's sense of orders established by God is closely linked with seeing that the right thing is done, out of the right perspective. It is important to discern that it is not a rigid system. Luther is flexible as he develops his thinking in response to the situations in which he finds himself. So Luther's understanding of the Estates, or hierarchies, despite being conceived in a time which we now consider as having a social order that was less flexible than our own, is not a rigid one. Christians are to act honourably, and fulfil all duties, even towards those to whom we are not obligated and who have no claim on us, for the sake of Christ. People must above all act justly. Responsibility for discerning what that means rests in Lutheran thought not just with Government, but with the Christian believer. This is to be done by all Christian believers, freed from a hierarchical sense of needing to follow blindly the dictates of a corrupt Church system, using their unrestricted access to, and submissive and increasing, engagement with, the word of God. Luther's acknowledged sense (LWII, No. 869, 516) of the world's racing faster and faster, with a corresponding sense of urgency about his life's mission of translating the Holy Scriptures into German, was in large measure related to the opening up of the truth revealed in Scripture to the multitudes of ordinary Christian believers. It was a mission and a joy for Luther to put into circulation copies of the Scriptures in the German language, because with these fresh and vital translations the message came to life as it was intended to be heard, understood and acted upon, by the believer herself. That message was full of challenge and encouragement to find inspiration and faith in Christ in and through the Scriptures. In *The Sermon on the Mount*, LW 21:33, Luther wrote:

> What is meant by a pure heart is this: one that is watching and pondering what God says and replacing its own ideas with the word of God ... therefore be on your guard against all your own ideas if you want to be pure before God. See that your heart is founded and fastened on the Word of God.

Correspondingly, although the order of society, and the ensuing prince or Government representing that order, might well be established by God, there would still always be in Luther the corollary that every human order and power is established with a *so that*: indeed, the very purpose of our being on earth is (*Table Talk*, LW 54: III-307) 'not that Christians become monks but *so that* they may live in fellowship and that our works and outworking of our faith may become known'. It might be asserted that Lutheran theology is always 'applied theology' in the sense that Luther wants right conduct to have the whole of the Christian knowledge of God behind it '*so that*' good conduct may result. In the case of the order of the clergy, this estate (with its corresponding high standing when correctly understood and lived out, (cf. *The Christian in Society*, LW 46: iii-223) is

established by God *so that* humankind might be delivered from the ultimate power of sin and death. Luther saw a fundamental equality before God in all Christian believers, which has come to be known as the priesthood of all believers. He castigated the notion that the priestly estate [*der geistliche Stand*] was somehow superior in status and value to the standing and work of the ordinary artisan, and affirmed the value (as Christian service) of work of all kinds, providing it was serving a just and noble cause, and especially if it was evidently demanded by the needs of one's neighbour. The difference, as he explained it, was simply in the exercising of a different office. He writes (*The Christian in Society*, LW 45 S. 45: III, 129ff.) 'there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests, princes and bishops, between religious and secular, except for the sake of office and work, but not for the sake of status'. In the case of the order of marriage, it is established *so that* children might be procreated and that human sexual activity might be contained and ordered aright. Luther's original view was that marriage was akin to a hospital for incurables, so strongly did he view human depravity in the area of sexual relations, but he (in the light of experience) modified this view to seeing marriage as not only an estate established by God, but also the source of all the other estates, and hence at the heart of his thinking on social order. We see a Luther whose theology develops and is strengthened by profound new insights and experiences, just as it came to be so for Bonhoeffer. (Luther married in 1525, and remained so until his death: Bonhoeffer became engaged in the closing chapter of his life). This order of marriage also encompassed the economic area of life which in Luther's time was centred generally on the home. Luther writes repeatedly and insistently about the value of productive, honest work and has no time for idleness (*The Christian in Society*, LW 45: III-337): 'God wills that humankind should work, and without work God will give humankind nothing'. He saw the purpose of work for humankind as a discipline, *so that* the flesh may be kept in subjection, or, as he puts it in *Lectures on Genesis* (LW 7: 63), *'so that* the flesh may be exercised and may not snore and become listless from inactivity'. However, that work is in vain if it thinks it can stand alone and sustain itself, because it must understand that all work is essentially the finding out and unearthing of God's prior provision: it must acknowledge our complete dependence upon God as provider, which alone brings peace. Work such as this is akin to prayer: Bonhoeffer notes with approval (DBW 9: 285) that 'Luther often prayed for three hours during the time of day best suited for work'. Luther for his part cites, also with approval, (*Devotional Writings*, LW 43: III: 209) a proverb, 'He who works faithfully prays twice'. He continues (*Devotional Writings* LW 43: 43):

> This can be said because a believer fears and honours God in his work and remembers the commandment not to wrong anyone, or to try to steal, defraud, or cheat.

Accordingly, the believer should, honouring Luther, work with zeal and diligence within the calling required of each. Bonhoeffer articulated his own sense of this in the formation work with

young people in Grunewald, in the context mentioned above which was energizing him to communicate God's truth in simple language. On this theme of calling, but also touching on the issue of order and obedience, he said (DBW 9: 492):

> Now we all have completely different duties, you have to do homework, I have to study, the pastor has to preach, the cobbler and carpenter have theirs: but behind all the different duties we all have one and the same duty, the cobbler, the Professor, you and your teachers and me. Who do we owe this duty to? You could say: to the state. But if I say to you, that all people everywhere have the same duty in one thing, you'll be able to say to me: we owe this duty to God, who is the Father of us all. Yes, we say, God is our Father and we are to be His children. That means then, the whole world is a big house, where there are many, many small rooms in which people live. But all the people in the house have *one* Father. Each one of us has his or her particular task [*Arbeit*] to keep our room in order, but everyone has one (special) duty, that of being obedient to our Father.

In Luther's thinking, working within one's calling might lead to a surprising choice of profession, but that choice could be justified in terms of the greater good. Luther made a sharp distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of this world. Those who truly believe in Christ live in the realm of the kingdom of God and need neither the secular arm, nor secular laws. Why then must the Christian submit to lawful authority? It had to be because of love for our neighbour, and readiness to protect that neighbour against wrong. In addition a Christian should also be ready to co-operate positively in society. It is with a theology of vocation like this in mind (as well as Luther's understanding, mentioned above, of *der geistliche Stand*) that Bonhoeffer formulated his theology of priesthood (DBW 9: 582):

> The Protestant pastor is a member of the congregation. The pastor serves as preacher and distributor of the sacraments, and nothing more. Like everyone else the pastor is allowed to marry. Being unmarried is not a merit. There is absolutely no Christian occupation or profession [*Beruf*] that is better than any other. One can serve God everywhere. For this reason, one should not flee from the world and its troubles, as do the monks.

The Christian for Luther can thus take on any work with a clear conscience, just as long as he/she has the necessary ability, and lives according to the pattern of good Christian conduct. Accordingly Luther wrote (*The Christian in Society II*, LW 45: 88-96):

> Therefore if you notice that an executioner, a courtier, a judge, a master, or a prince is needed, then you must offer yourselves for such positions if you feel you are qualified. Otherwise the power of the state, which we cannot do without, will be respected less, and

> weaken or completely dissolve. There is certainly no doubt that the world cannot work without it.

Likewise, developing this line of thinking, in the case of the order of Government (as mentioned above): it is established *so that* society might be preserved from chaos and disorder, and that people might accordingly be protected. Brunner, writing in *The Divine Imperative*, makes just this point, of purpose and connectedness, about Luther (1932, 85, my italics):

> Really good Christian conduct - speaking from the point of view of principle - ought to have the whole of the Christian knowledge of God 'behind' it. Luther in his Shorter Catechism has expressed this very well, since he begins the explanation of every commandment with the words: 'we ought thus to fear and love God, *in order that* we ...'

Along with this corollary was Luther's insistence that all the estates are themselves created *so that* ordinary people might best be served (as opposed to exploited or oppressed) through the actions of those in positions of power and responsibility. With the foregoing in mind, Luther certainly believed that following one's prince into a war when the prince is in the right was something that a Christian could and should do wholeheartedly and with a good conscience: for example, he wrote in *The Christian in Society II*, LW 45: III, 129:

> in a war of this sort it is both Christian and an act of love to kill the enemy without hesitation, to plunder and burn and injure him by every method of warfare and all that goes with it, until he is conquered (except that one must beware of sin, and not violate wives and virgins).

However, what would in Lutheran thought drive a believer to such actions would be a godly motivation, in that it would arise out of a sense of order, on the given and received understanding that princes and governments are there to establish and preserve order, *so that* chaos and human sinfulness may not run amok. Hence a prince asking subjects to fight in a good cause would be asking subjects to respond out of the basis of a God-given structure of order. As a part of this Luther would argue that obedience (even when it hurts) is a Christian duty as a part of sustaining and supporting the order God has established. At the same time it is characteristic of Luther (in line with the *so that* thinking alluded to above) that he would often add a highly significant and possibly decisive caveat, for example, LW 45: III, 129:

> What if a prince is in the wrong? Are his people bound to follow him then too? Answer: No, for it is no one's duty to do wrong; we must obey God (who desires the right) rather than men (Acts 5:29).

In respect to authority, especially after his excommunication by the papacy in 1521, not only Luther's freedom to work but his very life depended on the protection of secular rulers, in particular the cautious but nonetheless firm, and (in respect to Luther) loyal, Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony.[16] Consequently the believer's understanding that the principal organising idea in Luther's political thought is *'Oberkei"* - with its in-built notion of superiors/inferiors, for example - is informed by the awareness that continuous assessment was required as to whether a ruler was exercising authority justly, as well as the implicit notion that some kinds of authority and order were much to be respected and given thanks for, and certainly blessed by God.

Bonhoeffer's Lutheran identity and heritage would have made him more than conversant with Lutheran thought on order and work as outlined above. Already by June 1925 he was working at the higher levels of Lutheran scholarship in a Lutheran faculty under world-leading scholars who rated his work very highly. He chose in what emerges as an early example of his thinking about work to write a study of Luther's later-in-life reflections on his life's work. It is possible here to trace the themes of discipleship, costly obedience, and the leading grace of God, but more significantly what comes to the surface is Bonhoeffer's take on Luther's sense of vocation to a work of purposeful activity (DBW 9: 275, my italics):

> Two impressions move the elderly Luther deeply when he looks back on what now stands before him as a completed lifework and contemplates the difficult hour of its birth. The first is the feeling of being *propelled by a higher power* out of the deep darkness in which he found himself at that time, *toward the light and toward a task.* This was a task for which his own strength and insight would not have sufficed … the second however, is the impression that the path on which divine guidance had placed him was not straight and untroubled, but instead was steep, stormy and difficult to follow.

As a part of the cost of making his theology his life's work, an issue which Bonhoeffer took deeply into himself, Luther's own popularity with the common people took a major downturn in 1525 when - in the light of his theological thinking about authority - he opposed the peasants' revolt. It was around this time that he began to contemplate death. Bonhoeffer, impacted by this, not least because he had so often thought about the subject of death himself at night-times as a child together with his twin sister, wrote about this time for Luther (DBW 9: 273):

> Luther began to confront death during the first years of the Reformation, from about 1524-25 onward. He was weakened by serious illness. He believed death was imminent when, as a powerful outward witness to his faith, he married.

[16] Frederick's 'pride' in Luther doubtless had something to do with the fact that Luther was Frederick's employee.

Luther wrote that he experienced greater suffering than death. But the believer understands that because he now serves God's command, God works through him. This amounts to two ways of expressing the same meaning: whichever way around it is put, whether it is we serving God, or God working in us to effect His will, God works in the person of faith, i.e. the work that Christians do is God's work. Our work is not **our** work. The reader of Luther understands that for the Christian worker, involved as a minister, success or failure is not our own, just as our preaching is not ours. Bonhoeffer absorbed this and subsequently reflected a very deep sense of his own struggle with the emerging reality of working in God's service. It is on this subject that he touched most profoundly when he preached a sermon in May 1926 on Psalm 127, 1(NIV): 'Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the LORD guards the city, the guard keeps watch in vain'. Based on its content, this sermon could easily have been entitled 'How shall we (then) work?' (cf. table, and comment, on p. 57 above). It comes in the latter part of this intense period of Lutheran scholarship, and would seem to draw in much of his work thinking to date. In it he wrote a moving appeal to his young listeners that they might work wholeheartedly as working for God. Once again he alluded to the key need for work on ourselves and he exhorted his hearers that they might put God at the centre, not contemporary idols, that all might work better together as a society, but above all that each one might work in God's strength (DBW 9: 512-515):

> Let us not delude ourselves. God will not drop a city from the heavens, and God's holy commandments insist on being fulfilled. We must work with our dirty hands. We must labour even if it is only God who labours for eternity. We must work on ourselves, our families, our people, and our church, and still realize that everything is in vain if it is only we who build. This means that we must work with our eyes turned towards heaven, with the prayer that God will overlook the sinfulness of our accomplishment.

This idea (working with our eyes turned towards heaven) was a sentiment that Emil Brunner would later, in 1932, echo in the closing paragraphs of *The Divine Imperative,* a publication in which he cites Bonhoeffer's work *SC* with approval.

Thus the influence and importance of Lutheran thinking in general, and in particular, on the subject of work, can clearly be seen to have been absolutely vital, and formative at the deepest level, for Bonhoeffer. However, even in 1925 we can see a significant move in Bonhoeffer's relationship to Lutheran thought, which is evidenced by something that he clearly considers including, but then deletes. In the closing paragraph of the final manuscripts of this first chapter is a crossing out of the phrase 'God's primal order of creation'. In the original German text the words '*urständliche Schöpfungsordnung*' [primal creation] are used. Later, in 1932, this concept would prove most troublesome, and it is noticeable in *SC* how Bonhoeffer also coins an alternative phrase

(DBW 1: 78) asserting that 'certain forms of community are *Schöpfungsgemäss'* [in line/harmony with the created order]. Bonhoeffer here, in 1925, decided that omission was preferable to the inclusion of *Schöpfungsordnung* at the time of writing. The fact that this phrase, which later became so troublesome, is here crossed out represents an early but clear example of a prescient insight on the part of Bonhoeffer. It also illustrates how his theology of work was in the process of formation: honouring what he had taken on board, especially from Luther, but beginning to formulate his own way of moving on. In utilising this pattern, Bonhoeffer may be said to have followed an established tradition of Christian practice in this respect, and the fact that it is an established tradition is something which Alistair McGrath draws attention to in *Heresy* (2009, 179). In what he describes as Augustine's classic analysis of the relation of faith and secular philosophy he writes:

> Israel left behind the 'idols and burdens' of Egypt while taking with her a wealth of 'gold and silver and clothes'. Israel discarded what she regarded as theologically dangerous or oppressive whilst appropriating what was excellent and valuable. And so, Augustine argues, should the church appropriate the riches of contemporary culture – appropriating what is good and useful, and disregarding what is dangerous and oppressive.

Sanctorum Communio

The publication *Sanctorum Communio* itself is a profound and somewhat inaccessible study of the Church which also touches deeply on the theme of human interdependence. *SC* begins with a very short first chapter outlining the case for the theological 'ownership' of the subject matter, understanding the nature of the given reality of a church of Christ, from the perspective of the distinct disciplines of social philosophy and sociology. Despite the academic register, we can already sense the characteristic theme of 'whole life involvement in work' in the phrase (DBW 1: 18) '*cum* ira et studio'[*with* passionate zeal]. In it Bonhoeffer wrote about how human will comes into being. He noted (DBW 1: 44) that it is formed in the process of encountering '*Wiederstände*' [things that offer resistance]. Normally, he wrote (DBW 1: 45), it is the case that resistance takes the form of encounter with other people. As a consequence, human will can be said to depend upon interdependence (or, to use a less current phrase, sociality) for its own existence, and for participation in reality. The picture is evoked of an infant encountering life and boundaries through interaction with another infant, or perhaps a parent or governess. Yet the same image also provokes for the reader the question as to whether it is only in this way that the will is formed, but not perhaps also through encountering resistance in the form of tasks, and further that it is in these (namely, work) that human will finds much of its raison d'être, and hence that its outworking locates the human will in reality. The picture that comes to mind here is more of the determined toddler purposefully intent upon achieving an exercise. Of course, this also raises further questions,

such as where the boundary may lie between play, rest, and the achieving of tasks as work. Bonhoeffer continued along this train of thought, making the link between human community, conscious human spirit, and work, and beginning to articulate a theology of work as he wrote (DBW 1: 52):

> Human community per se is only present where conscious human spirit is at work, that is, where community rests upon purposeful acts of will. Human community, then, does not necessarily result from acts of will: rather its essence subsists in such acts.

From the above it can de clearly discerned how for Bonhoeffer the role of work is as central to human community as the acts resulting from purposeful acts of the will are to work. The formulation which most clearly makes this connection is found in DBW 1: 58:

> The first act of affirming that one belongs to a community is usually embedded in a concrete, living, non-formal act such as conscious participation in the work of a community.

What we see *in nuce* here is the deep and early connection between Bonhoeffer's thinking about human interdependence and human work. To put things another way, if Bonhoeffer sees that as the human will encounters resistance (both from others and from tasks) so it discovers self, and is formed, it is (often) through work that its expression becomes concrete. In the same way that truth which is believed must have a concrete locus within the reality of the world, so too do human acts as the outworking of human will find their concrete locus largely within work. The link between will and reality which Bonhoeffer makes in *SC* is that as the human person always exists in relation to an 'other' so too does the will of another person constitute a 'limit' for self and others and hence a participation in reality. This participation works both at the level of revelation (being sought) and redemption (being found). It is revelatory because, for Bonhoeffer, only in relation to an encounter of persons is Christ really revealed and present. It is redemptory in that this participation in reality is made salvific in the context of Christian community, where the sacraments are shared (cf. also LW 35: 62 cit. DBW 1: 117) and fellowship is based on conflict worked through in relationship and prayer rather than on (DBW 1: 192) 'romantic feelings of solidarity'. Bonhoeffer does not modify what he takes on from Luther, that (*Sermons I*, LW 51: 70, DBW 1:119) 'No-one can die for another, but everyone must battle with death on their own'. He acknowledges (DBW 1: 194) that 'at the last judgement, everyone becomes *einsam* (lonely)'. But in his characteristic way of emphasis, he contrasts this very loneliness with the theme of connected interdependence (also invoking Khomaikov, DBW 1: 123, cf. also DBW 1: 133) as he cites Luther's *Tesseradecas* (fourteen consolations for those who labour and are heavy laden) (*Devotional Writings*, LW 42:163, DBW 1: 118):

> Therefore when we feel pain, when we suffer, when we die, let us turn to this, firmly believing that it is not we alone, but Christ and the Church who are in pain …we set out on the road of suffering accompanied by the whole Church.

This sense of being joined with Christ's suffering through membership of the *SC* as *Kollektivperson* (a collective person) links with, and introduces the concept of, (DBW 1: 75, 91ff., 99 ff., 121 ff.) *Stellvertretung* (translated in DBWE as vicarious representative action, a phrase encapsulating the sense of God's definitive and self-giving work on our behalf) which will later emerge as a further thematic development of his thought. (Note also DBW 1: 126, where intercession is seen as *Stellvertretung*). Here in *SC* it is only mentioned in outline form, but in it we see already how God's work (on our behalf) is seen as the ground of reality which in turn informs and enables our human response. Hence for Bonhoeffer, free participation in the work of a community speaks responsively to the issue of the fundamental isolation of the knowing 'I'. That this work should be done in freedom is significant. In his work for Holl on "Luther's view of the Holy Spirit," written at this time, he noted (DBW 9: 375) 'Now freedom and action are no longer opposed to each other'. In his concurrent formation work with the young people in Grunewald alluded to above he went on to mention, albeit in light-hearted vein, the wondrous feeling associated with the idea of freedom in love (DBW 9: 493, developed in 494ff.): 'You get to work freely, with great love, think about it, holiday in the middle of work!' So it is the (free) work of loving people volitionally which Bonhoeffer had in mind when he wrote about the open-ended work of love offered by the good Samaritan (DBW 1: 168):

> It cannot be said of Christian love, therefore, that 'in everything it does it only loves in others, the dormant or dawning possibility, that they will become members of its own (the Christian) community; but it does not love the reality of the You'. Just the opposite is true.

Hints for the future: anticipating his evolving theology and the eventual mandates formulation

In terms of Bonhoeffer's own life and work, it is worth noting at this point (albeit in passing) how compelling a case theologically this statement (above) makes in contemporary times for inter-faith work, at a time when such leading-edge work of this nature is actually underway in parts of our own society. It was a statement incipiently about a particular kind of work which is consistent with Bonhoeffer's subsequent acceptance of the offer of a role in what at the time was seen as leading-edge ecumenical work, the bringing-together of those of different denominations.

Much later, in 1940, Bonhoeffer would further develop his thinking into the doctrine of the mandates. Retaining what was good within that thinking, he would move on from the three estates of Luther, mentioned above, but further underlining Luther's existing theme of freedom, to

essentially four mandates of Marriage and Family, State, Church, and Work [Culture]. What is interesting at this early stage (1925 - 1927) is that there are some instances we may observe of the earliest formulation of this thinking already taking shape. For example, Bonhoeffer found himself thinking about Marriage (a future mandate) as (DBW 1: 154) 'the smallest sociological unit'. Bonhoeffer also drew a comparison between the Church and Marriage (both future mandates) when he wrote about the Church (DBW 1: 179) 'It is an ethical *Kollektivperson*: it has its own culpability, just as marriage does'. In a separate passage he picked up this concept again when he wrote about judgement applying not only to individual persons but also to *Kollektivpersonen.* He wrote (DBW 1: 194): 'Nation, family, marriage: - all undergo their judgement as individual entities'[17]. Perhaps most tellingly, he links an incipient framework for almost the full future set of mandates (State, marriage, family, or religious community) with this subject matter of *SC* (DBW 1: 52):

> The subject matter of any systematic sociological investigation is the acts of will that are essentially operative in any community, not the origins of the state, marriage, family or religious community.

In the light of the foregoing, we might also observe Bonhoeffer's contention that how work works (work being the general way in which acts of the will find their concrete expression) in a given community is the appropriate subject matter for any systematic sociological investigation, and accordingly, he takes work very seriously. At this stage Green argues that how Bonhoeffer is seeing the world is through what he has called the lens of a *Theology of Sociality* (cf. my subsequent chapter 5, 'Responsible theological work'). However, my own view is that here in 1927 we can identify an underlying theology of work which is in the process of being formed. What Bonhoeffer is saying at this initial stage is that his study of sociality rightly concerns itself with the acts of human will, which find a primary expression or coming to life in work, rather than how things came into being as they are. The outworking is more important than any 'given'. How the believer lives and works *today* in Christ and for others in Him in those acts of human will, is seen as the important element in social order. This sense of immediacy is also picked up in the way Bonhoeffer writes about Christian service. He writes about 'Being-for-each-other' in work and acts of love (DBW 1: 121):

> Being-for-each-other must be actualized through acts of love. Three great possibilities of acting for each other present themselves: Self-renouncing active work for our neighbor · Intercessory prayer · Mutual forgiveness of sins in God's name.

[17] Almost three future mandates.

But this work, as Bonhoeffer saw it at this time, is costly. He wrote not only that this work must absorb our whole strength (DBW 1: 122) but also, anticipating echoes of his own subsequent approach to marriage, his subsequent call to resistance, and some aspects of his book *Nachfolge*, (DBW 1: 122) that 'in this self-renouncing work for my neighbour, it is apparent that I give up happiness'. He would feel differently about such comments by 1940 and write about the importance, linked with Christian maturity, of happiness (cf. DBW 15: 504). But for the young Bonhoeffer, work would prove costly indeed, and here we see clear early evidence of some of the roots of his thinking. The next chapter of this thesis: 'a well-hidden *Verlassenheit'* will discuss one key outworking of this. It was an area in which he would not stand still, and as his thinking moved on, 'work' would move in due course more centre stage to be considered as a mandate in itself.

SC can thus be seen to have offered fertile soil for Bonhoeffer's incipient theological thinking about work and social order. That this thinking was in the process of formation we observe in particular when he wrote supportively (DBW 1: 54) about strife and in similar vein (DBW 1: 74) about war. His thinking in this area would move on considerably from the position outlined here. In addition, his otherwise profound grasp of the person and work of the Holy Spirit is at variance with his immature statement in DBW 1: 89. Here he wrote (in DBWE 1: 143) about the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church that He 'is at work only within it' [The German is *'nur in ihr wirksam*']. The translation of '*wirksam*' at two further points elsewhere in DBW 1 as 'operative' validates the rendition given here. The point Bonhoeffer was attempting to make was presumably to provide an emphasis on the foundational all-important work and role of the Holy Spirit. However, suggesting that the Holy Spirit is *only* operative within the Church drifts too far from an orthodox understanding within Christian theology, which would recognise the work of the Holy Spirit in places other than the Church, for example, in Creation.

A kindred spirit: Bernanos

Around the time of finishing *SC*, Bonhoeffer first encountered the work of Georges Bernanos, whose novel *Sous le soleil de Satan* was published in Germany in 1927. Bethge (2000, 139) records that this was a gripping and disturbing encounter for Bonhoeffer. A number of reasons suggest themselves as to why from the perspective of Bonhoeffer's emerging theology of work, this was indeed the case. First, Bonhoeffer found in Bernanos a 'kindred spirit'. Bernanos was a novelist of no small stature (whose books became highly popular in France during his lifetime and have remained so to this day). His approach is to draw the reader in to his own introspective world in such a way that the experience is at the same time both alluring and repugnant. He sees the world and human nature with a devastating clarity of insight. His characters go to deep places. He is prone to make casually or in passing the most profound of insights. One

example among dozens which could be adduced in relation to this aspect of Bernanos comes in *Sous le soleil de Satan*, where he writes (1982, 52, my translation): 'it is natural for us to hate our own suffering in the suffering of others'. He is a writer whose deep insight could so easily end up presenting a dark and hopeless landscape, but somehow Bernanos takes the reader to the abyss and yet offers a glimmer of hope. John Cook, writing in *Georges Bernanos, a study of Christian Commitment*, assesses his work as offering hope of a sort (1981, 35): 'Unless Christian ideas could once again re-awaken men's consciences, unless the 'spiritual revolution' took place shortly, Bernanos was convinced that the world was doomed'.

As a part of going into the darkest places and confronting both evil itself and the depths of human nature in both oneself and others, Bernanos has a constant theme in his writings of good and heroic characters dying young or at an early age. This would have resonated with Bonhoeffer, who not only had a fascination with death (mentioned above in relation to childhood patterns of conversation with his twin sister) but who also had a clear sense that he might die at age 40. Cook (1981, 29) writes on this:

> It has been said that Bernanos' entire vocation as a writer was sustained by this same fear of death and that his writings formed part of a personal struggle to come to terms with the problem of death.

Not only does Bernanos touch closely, and for Bonhoeffer, captivatingly, on the theme of death, he also explores the subject of pride and spiritual pride within Christians, especially those who claim to have some kind of vocation. His lead characters are mainly clergy or people who have taken holy orders. Bernanos pulls no punches on the devastating reality of human sinfulness, (seen in all characters and his leading ones equally) and in that sense is ahead of his time in stripping away from such people unhelpful projections which others make onto them. His lead character priest reflects in *Sous le soleil de Satan* (1982, 119, my translation):

> No matter how obstinately he observed him, he could not catch him out in any of the signs which betray the activity of pride and ambition, the studied anxiety, mood swings between confidence and despair, a worry which does not mislead ... and yet ... whilst his outward demeanour is that of a saint, something in him repels and puts one on one's guard.

Another reason to suggest that all this was highly significant for Bonhoeffer's emerging theology of work and vocation is that there is a link between the theme of spiritual pride with connected waves of despair (as above) which Bernanos addresses, and the life stage at which

Bonhoeffer found himself at that time. In the period 1927- 1928, as he discovered this novelist he was re-framing his own sense of self and vocation, and was about to embark on writing *Akt und Sein*. In this piece of work, he would bring to the fore the soteriological problem - already adumbrated in *SC* – at the heart of his theological anthropology. This is the problem of the powerful, dominant self, who particularly in his intellectual activity, adopts an autonomous, self-referring, isolated and self-enclosed attitude to reality (cf. Green, 1972). But Bonhoeffer was also engaged in re-thinking and exploring what it really meant for himself to 'enter the Church'. What would seem to attract Bonhoeffer is some of the devastating honesty of the self-analysis, particularly in relation to vocation and ministry, in which the priests in Bernanos' work engage. In a moving passage on this theme Bernanos takes the reader on a journey to a difficult place, and in the light of comments made above, some of the choices of phrasing (not least the reference to despair, and being *renfermé en soi* (closed in on oneself) provide already a strong resonance (1926, 120, my translation):

> Wherever God calls, we must follow, so had the other one said. He was called. Follow, or be lost. He was lost (…) this will of God upon his poor soul suffocated the very prayer rising to his lips … the penetration of despair. Never had this unfortunate seen himself (he believes) so clearly, so starkly. Ignorant, fearful, eternally bound by a slavish devotion, distrustful, closed in on himself, lacking soul contact with others, solitary… the least heroic amongst men.

My assertion is that the deep connection that Bethge alludes to between Bonhoeffer and Bernanos is actually about work, and specifically the work of a priest. Bonhoeffer's pathway towards ordination would mean that he was ordained later, in 1931. But in 1928 he was starting to re-frame what it might mean for him. Writing in '*The role of the priest in the novels of Georges Bernanos*' (1983, xv) E. O'Sharkey notes about Bernanos that:

> It was not the priest's status in society that was of greatest interest to the novelist but the sacramental powers conferred on him by his ordination and the mystery of divine grace by which the layman was transformed into the priest.

In this context (that of understanding something of the nature of this work and calling) the related theme of integrity comes naturally into the foreground. How does the Christian believer connect life and work? It runs like a golden thread throughout Bernanos' works, and is never far from the mind of Bonhoeffer. The next phase of Bonhoeffer's life would introduce for him a new element of this potential integration and connectedness as his own call both to his unique work and to the resisting of bad work became clearer.

In summary, this chapter has demonstrated that there is a strong connection between Bonhoeffer's family background, and in particular his Lutheran heritage, and his emerging theology of work in the period 1906-1927. It has been possible to trace an emerging pattern of Bonhoeffer's in which he takes due account of what he has absorbed from his heritage and moves on to integrate and incorporate this learning or information into whatever new circumstances he faced. In discussing *SC,* the point has been made that it is (often) through work that expressions of human will become concrete. A link has been established between *SC*'s expression of theological thinking and Bonhoeffer's later development of the concept of the mandates; and in a short section, Bonhoeffer's kindred spirit Georges Bernanos has been identified as a significant influence on his work thinking. In this way the central importance of work in Bonhoeffer's life and thought right from the earliest days has been established. The following chapter sets out how Bonhoeffer would shortly make a wholly different kind of commitment to work, in this case the work of serving the Church, one so profound that, I will argue, Bonhoeffer even placed his commitment to work above thoughts of marriage.

Chapter 4: *A well-hidden Verlassenheit*

This chapter demonstrates that during the period 1928-1930 Bonhoeffer's thinking about work was modified and deepened by his own life and work experience. First of all Bonhoeffer develops his academic thinking about Church, then travels to Barcelona. Here he begins to find a new kind of fulfilment in working for the Church in a particular role, which in turn calls into question for him his relationship with his work, provoking the further problem of what form his work should take if it is not to be within academic theology. By the time he has experienced America and then returned back home to ordination in Berlin, his understanding of how work and Church are linked has moved on apace. Regular attendance at a church in America marks the beginning of a major shift in this area for Bonhoeffer and it is not long before he makes a wholly different kind of commitment to the work of serving the Church, one so profound that, I will argue, Bonhoeffer even placed it above thoughts of marriage. The word *Verlassenheit* which in English reflects the sentiments of isolation and forlorn-ness, is a word Bonhoeffer would use in 1936 to describe himself during the period prior to and around 1931-1933. The well-known and oft-cited, (and perhaps hithero somewhat misunderstood) passage reads (DBW 10: 113):

> I was my own Lord and master: I had never (really) prayed: I was completely happy with myself amidst all my *Verlassenheit*…then it became clear to me that the servant of Jesus must belong to the Church.

This passage reveals the key insight that essentially Bonhoeffer was at a deeper level less happy and rather more *verlassen*. The connection between this deeper-level dissatisfaction and work is that work was taking priority for Bonhoeffer over the affairs of the heart. This assertion will be discussed more fully as the chapter develops.

In Barcelona, in 1928, Bonhoeffer's experience proved formative. Initially the German *Vikar* [pre-ordination curate] did not particularly relate to the work element of his role as a serious one: his initial comments were along the lines of time being occupied without there being much in the way of work. He wrote to Walter Dress on March 13th (DBW 17: 71): 'I haven't managed to do very much work yet'. However, the reader senses an immediate connectedness with, and authenticity to, the on-going work of delivering sermons, such as the one he delivered in July, when he touches upon the subject of faith itself as work (DBW 10: 480ff.). His message to the working person, and his other listeners, is to take care that they don't wake up from the bustle of the everyday and find that they have become 'hollow on the inside'. He was able to preach and testify about the counter-intuitive need for stillness, and the way in which work which over-absorbs can militate against the deeper cry of the soul. Yet at the same time he touches on the

thread of how our work on ourselves comes often in the engaging of one's will versus the resistance which our human nature throws up. Here Bonhoeffer is sensing, and starting to articulate, the call of work at the deeper level. In what appears as an overly lengthy address he preached that (DBW 10: 484):

> Transaction with God must be practised: otherwise we cannot find the right tone, the right word, the right language, when He surprises us. We have to learn the language of God, painstakingly, we have to work at it, so that we can talk to him as well: even prayer must be practiced and learnt, be seriously worked at…. religion is work, and perhaps the hardest - and certainly the holiest - work a person can do. Nobody we know has achieved it (a relationship with God) without work. The reason lies in the fact that even stillness before God requires practice and work.

Only months later, by the summer, Bonhoeffer was writing about a new and striking experience: that of life and work coming together. In contrast, academic theological work appears time-wasting [*zeitraubend*] and boring. A lot had happened in six months. Bonhoeffer enthused about this in a letter to Helmut Rossler (DBW 10: 90):

> You know from my first letter a little bit about my sphere of work [*Arbeitsgebiet*]: it is a wholly unique experience to see work and life really come together - a synthesis we all looked for in student days and hardly found when you really live one life, not two, or rather, half a life: it gives value to the work and substance to the worker, recognition of the boundaries of oneself in a way that can only be gained in real life [*am konkreten Leben*].

Bonhoeffer further developed his thinking about work during the autumn of his Spanish *Vikariat* [pre-ordination curacy] in his 'Notes for a young man' and a sermon. In the former, (DBW 10: 542) he wrote under the heading 'Work' about the subject in a way which, a dozen years before Viktor Klemperer began his writing, has a striking affinity with sentiments that Klemperer would later articulate.[18] Here he picked up again the thread he had addressed in his May 1926 sermon

[18] In the July of 1940, having finally been forced out of the family home in May, Klemperer has experienced eight days in prison for a minor blackout offence, and he writes with no little emotion about the joy of receiving a pencil with which to write (and work) around halfway through his sentence: 'On my pencil I climb back to earth out of the hell of the last four days' (2000, 504). The shock effect of prison also helps Klemperer re-assess his relationship with a different kind of work – housework – which, he notes on July 6th 'of course after the nothingness now seems pleasant to me' (476). Plainly there are for Klemperer higher and lower orders of work, the latter including housework. At the other end entirely of the spectrum would be 'giving meaning to life' – and as time progresses, so does the Klemperer connection between working, surviving, defying Nazism, and having a meaning in life grow ever closer. The more desperate the Jews' plight, the more intense does his determination become. On May 29th 1942 Klemperer notes: 'to the very last moment I want to live and to work, as if I were certain of surviving'(77). For further comment please see my footnote on p.168.

about the importance of work, especially of work on ourselves, whilst also unknowingly anticipating the extent to which his own prison months will be informed and alleviated by different kinds of work (DBW 10: 542):

> You think, work is an unpleasant change from play: but you are growing up and need to learn to understand that we don't work for someone else, but for ourselves. Work is the way through which a person makes something of themselves. All work should be at heart work on yourself. Are you aware, that in the prisons, it is the most terrible punishment, if prisoners have their work taken away? Work gets you through the tough hours, work comforts you and makes you calm, work is the last thing a sinking person can cling to. Woe to the one who has not learnt how to work: thank those who taught you.

In the same autumn Bonhoeffer also used the passage of Luke 17: 33 (the one who loses their life will gain it for eternal life) as a basis to preach and further explore theologically the links between passion (as in self-giving), being consumed, and being re-created. According to Bonhoeffer, it is in our God-willed passion that lies the 'inexhaustible blessing on our professional work [*Berufsarbeit*]' ((DBW 10: 519) and the related lack of blessing upon the machinery in factories with which workers may never have a personal, passionate relationship. He continued (DBW 10: 519):

> On this basis the word '*Beruf*' [profession] recaptures its original, religious, holy meaning: woe to the man and the woman, who never experienced anything of this, woe to the society [*Geschlecht*] which prevents people from giving and finding themselves in their work [*Beruf*] profession. From this source, springs of eternity flow out, into friendship, marriage, every human relationship and family.

As was apparent in the earlier period, in his *SC* writing days, Bonhoeffer was here making threads of connection which he would later weave together in his thinking on mandates. But what the reader also discerns is the tension between the all-absorption of work when it is given such a high priority and how that is at its peak when it comes into conflict with a potential marriage. In Bonhoeffer's case, this began to become a pressing issue as he returned to Berlin.

Hiding Verlassenheit [forlorn-ness] with aufgepeischter Arbeitsleitung [frenzied work achievement]

By the turn of the year 1929 Bonhoeffer was beginning to turn his thinking to the area of ethics in business, which he notes as one where unsatisfactory and comfortless Christian commentary exists. On the whole subject of the smaller being ruined by the larger, in 'Basic questions of a Christian Ethic' (DBW 10: 341) Bonhoeffer accepted that sometimes the status quo

in all its ambiguity has to be addressed and already notes that it is more helpful to ground an ethical approach in our *dependence upon God* and *responsibility before Him* (my italics) rather than in fixed commandments. The word turmoil comes to mind for Bonhoeffer as he returned to Germany and wrote to a friend, D. Albers, quite literally about what he can smell in the air about the nation's relationship with the subject of work and its seriousness (DBW 10: 144):

> I can't feel properly settled in Germany again. Spiritual over- production has something off-puttingly unspiritual about it. It smells to me too much of sweat in Germany: that's not an uninvolved-aesthetic judgement on the situation, but I fear it may be the fated path of Germany through her love of work, knowledge, the ethos of searching, from the freedom from slavery amidst all that, and that is the way to spiritual 'assassination'.

The writing of *Act and Being* in the course of the latter part of 1929 represented a significant landmark for Bonhoeffer. It was a momentous year in world events. 1929 was the year of Stalin's revolution in the USSR and also the year of crisis in the capitalist world. It was in 1929 that Dr Josef Goebbels, the Nazi *Gauleiter* of Berlin, became his party's national propaganda chief, and a minister in Bochum decorated his church with Swastika flags. In academia, in 1929, Emil Brunner's essay 'The other task of theology', with all its consequences for Karl Barth[19], appeared in the journal *Zwischen den Zeiten*, and Heidegger succeeded Husserl in the chair of philosophy at Freiburg. The January of 1929 had seen the launch of Volume 1 of what was to become not just a journal, but a school of history of unrivalled authority, the '*Annales d'histoire économique et sociale*', in which Davies reports that the publishing directors (Davies, 1996, 955):

> were preparing to do battle against the sin of specialisation … historians (had been) concentrating their efforts ever more narrowly behind their own *cloisonnements* or dividing walls and were appealed to in unambiguous terms, while tending their own gardens, to 'take the trouble to study the work of their neighbours … despite the fact that the walls are so high that often the view is blocked'.

In this context, both generally and particularly in the light of the launch of the *Annales* journal, the period of the composition of *Act and Being* marked both a high and a low point for Bonhoeffer: a zenith was reached in terms of the production of a sample of the breadth of his academic theological insight, but by his own very high standards, so too was a nadir: recalling the comments he made in 1926 about the worthlessness of deep theological pronouncements unless they could be adequately explained to the children of Grunewald, the extent (for him) of the gap in

[19] Barth's eventual reply to Brunner was a pamphlet simply called *Nein*! and for which he became well known.

his preaching output during the period throughout which *Act and Being* was written, is striking (DBW 9: 545). Perhaps equally significantly, the quality of his (assessed) children's catechesis, delivered 4 months after the handing in of *Act and Being*, was adjudged as very poor. Curiously, also during the year in which he was engaged in writing *Act and Being* there is a pause in the written articulation of his theological thinking about work. It is as if Bonhoeffer was internally dissatisfied, with a sense of disconnectedness from a deeper or different calling awaiting articulation and exploration in his working life. For one thing, he was forming a relationship with a fellow curate-to-be which would threaten to disturb his orderly world, and it is this Elizabeth to whom Bonhoeffer would inscribe a copy of his habilitation thesis. It was a gesture and compliment which she would return in 1932.

For good reason, the subject of Bonhoeffer's failure in his relationship with Elizabeth Zinn to communicate to her the true feelings he had for her has received scant attention. One way of understanding this is to recall that the reader's primary window onto Bonhoeffer's life is Bethge, his loyal friend. As a loyal friend, he would have had little motivation to write up in detail the true significance of this relationship, particularly because Elizabeth Zinn, when in 1935 it came to light via a shared friend that their sentiments were mutual and had simply not been articulated to each other, relatively quickly became engaged to someone known to both Bonhoeffer and Bethge, Günter Bornkamm. As both Günter and Elizabeth thankfully survived the war, it would have been indelicate to document the true significance of the relationship. It is not too fanciful to suggest that an appropriate level of camouflage would, for Bethge, have been desirable.[20] Furthermore it would seem entirely honourable as a publisher that one would not reward the source of all the London letters with any unduly overt reference to her previous near romance. However in this chapter it seems to me that the time has come to make some connections which are perhaps overdue. It is right to be more informative than Bethge who with transparent understatement omits her name at one point and simply refers to Elizabeth as an (2000, 204) 'acquaintance to whom he was close for a time'. This next section demonstrates that for Bonhoeffer the transition from what was for him the *Verlassenheit* of albeit academic brilliance to the subsequent and gradual deeper discovery of energy and purposefulness as a resistance pastor in London can perhaps travel via the Kierkegaardian place of despair, and that the centre of that despair for Bonhoeffer goes beyond the academic in that it is profoundly connected with Elizabeth Zinn. This is shown not least in the sense that having made the painful mistake of prioritising work over Elizabeth, (or, failed to see his own deeper desire for something that would perhaps require him to question the intensity/ interpretation of his commitment to work) he then needed to throw himself into work with redoubled passion for the whole of the forthcoming phases of his life. In fact in the April of 1932

[20] It is perhaps significant in the light of this comment that when Bethge allows himself to mention Zinn he immediately goes on to write at some considerable length about a non-romantic lasting friendship of huge significance between Bonhoeffer and Hildebrandt.

he articulated almost precisely this sentiment in a public lecture, even mentioning marriage as an alternative way of finding deeper and lasting purpose. With the benefit of hindsight it seems entirely feasible that he may have been thinking of his own situation (DBW 11: 216, trans. altered):

> We decide, partly out of boredom, partly out of indignation, somehow to make an end to our feeling of superfluousness, be it in whipped-into-action work achievement, [*aufgepeitschter Arbeitsleistung*] or through marriage.

What Bonhoeffer did, I suggest, was to choose the *aufgepeitschter Arbeitsleistung* option over Elizabeth Zinn. The basis for this assertion lies in various sources. We have already seen something of the profound significance of the family home upon Bonhoeffer, and how in order to understand Bonhoeffer, the personal has to be understood in conjunction with the academic. During the latter part of his time away in Barcelona, and upon his return to Berlin, he spoke and preached profoundly, movingly and often, about a lack of peace (DBW 10: 535, 537, 580). By 1929 Bonhoeffer, the youngest male of eight children, was almost the only remaining child at home, since that year his twin sister Suzanne had got married to Walter Dress. His siblings constantly had the thought of his possible marriage on their lips (cf. Bethge, 2000, 147). He greeted the moment of being 'last to get wed' when it came in 1930 by departing for the USA. It is scarcely possible to conceive that he would not have been wrestling at least to some extent with thoughts as to his own destiny in this respect. It is at this time that he first articulated to his cousin Von Hase his deep sense of his being likely to experience an early death (DBW 10: 597) and not only this, it can be seen from reports of discussions with him that what was also occupying his mind significantly during that period were the key existential themes raised by writers such as Bernanos, Kierkegaard, and Dostoyevsky. It was in 1929 that he first exchanged books with Elizabeth, his distant cousin, in what would become a pattern. Metaxas (2010, 66) notes that when Bonhoeffer's post-doctoral thesis was published in 1930, he inscribed a copy to her; and when her dissertation was published in 1932, she inscribed a copy to him. By the time he was in post as a London pastor, Bonhoeffer was sufficiently close to Elizabeth to feel moved to post the original copies of his week-by-week London sermons to her, which is how they have come to be preserved. For Bonhoeffer, as for many pastors, preaching was a giving space, a time of self-disclosure where he would give of his very best in the moment, and the sending across of sermons would have been an emotional transaction reserved to a closely, at times uniquely, trusted recipient. In a highly charged shorthand Bethge notes (Bethge, 2000, 138) that what came to be one of Bonhoeffer's favourite quotations 'embodiment is the end of God's path' from Oetinger, originated from Elizabeth. Not only were these two on a wavelength as to the theological and life importance of such a thought but also perhaps Elizabeth herself came to embody something that Bonhoeffer felt was right for him, namely, marriage, but Bonhoeffer felt that he could not justify to himself the indulgence of something he desired at such a deep level. Further, that as he wrestled within himself

with the subject of following God's will and the resistance of the human will, (in this case his own) he chose to prioritise the Church, the very Church that would reject his counsel so resoundingly in 1933. In respect of this idea it is possible to look at the key evidence passage in this respect in a new light. It reads (DBW 14: 113):

> I was my own Lord and master: I had never (really) prayed: I was completely happy with myself amidst all my *Verlassenheit*…then it became clear to me that the servant of Jesus must belong to the Church.

It seems to me plain that what Bonhoeffer here admitted to in 1936 is that the source of much of his feelings of forlorn-ness by 1932 was Elizabeth herself, and that in this letter he is in fact apologizing to her that he chose to prioritise working for the Church over investing sufficient time in the relationship with her which may have ended up with marriage as an outcome. He used Christian vocational language as a sort of justification of his (in) actions, something which he hoped she, as one who had been in 1932 a fellow curate (Gerhard Jakobi's curate) would accept, and also forgive. But the fall-out for Bonhoeffer was an intensity of his relationship with work which would take him years to process and only found something of its resolution much later on when in 1943 he became engaged under stressful circumstances to a nineteen-year-old some twenty years his junior. In the meantime the theme of work coming ahead of personal life choices such as marriage would continue to recur repeatedly in the years ahead, and has a curious parallel in the life of Kierkegaard. The latter was engaged to be married to Regine Olson and despite loving her, broke off the relationship, an event which ironically sparked much of his prolific writing genius. But for his part Kierkegaard remained '*verlassen*' about it all his life. In Bonhoeffer's case, the engagement to Maria, for all its poignancy and brevity, appears to have had a sense of rightness and even healing. Further testimony to the contention that at a deep level, Bonhoeffer was *verlassen* about the business of putting his head above his heart, or his angst above his intuition, comes in the letter of May 1944 to Maria which was published in 1992. Here Bonhoeffer wrote to Maria about the eight year duration of his mutually undeclared love relationship with Elizabeth, and he concludes with the revealing (but to a fiancée, strange-sounding) words: (*Brautbriefe Zelle 92*, 1992, 190, my trans.)'Work for the Church came to absorb me entirely and I felt it was right and proper for me to forgo marriage altogether'. He had articulated afresh this sentiment in 1938 (DBW 15: 91). It is perhaps no wonder (in 1930) that Bonhoeffer was of the opinion that it was never right for clergy to marry. It was not that he was sensing a sudden call away from the Lutheran Church to the Catholic fold, he was simply articulating what he felt was right for him, as one who deeply sought to know what it meant to live a life of faith. He was already well underway with his thoughts on an intentional Christian community. It would be a community of single disciples with a high, if not driven, view of work, and Bonhoeffer would be free to preach and teach the work theology he was living out, at some cost.

Act and Being

Athough the text of *Act and Being* itself may appear to make only a modest contribution in terms of work theology, and we are left 'reading the runes' somewhat in order to trace the developing thread of Bonhoeffer's thought, yet what does emerge from this period, particularly in what Bonhoeffer takes on from Heidegger (as will be mentioned below), is highly significant in terms of what lay just ahead. In the context of a work whose main subject is theological anthropology, a central question with which Bonhoeffer engaged, and around which he framed his far-reaching critique of social anthropology, is 'What is the relationship between the being of God and the mental act which grasps that being?' In this short but pregnant question issues are raised which reach both back to Kant and forward to engage with the contemporary debate set in motion by Heidegger. Kant had criticized the claim of metaphysical reason to discern the Absolute and (thereby) to claim some kind of control over Being. But metaphysics has a characteristic and unfortunate tendency to create a division between such things as appearance and reality, living and believing, earth and heaven, this world and the beyond, and the natural and the supernatural. For his part Kant had also given powerful reinforcement to metaphysics by - for example - his separation of the noumenal from the phenomenal, and by separating the thing-in-itself from humankind's experience of it. In response, Bonhoeffer's conceptual approach was to put forward an 'authentic' ontology, one which has as its concern to (DBW 2: 53) 'demonstrate the primacy of being over against consciousness and to uncover this being'. He continued to wrestle with the subject of the power issues surrounding the activation of the human will, so often worked out in work, seen this way, and this subject is expressed more fully in the passage (DBW 2: 23):

> Act should be thought of as pure intentionality, akin to being. Given that the act takes place in consciousness, we must distinguish between direct consciousness [*actus directus*] and the consciousness of reflection [*actus refluxus*]. In the former, consciousness is purely 'outwardly directed' whereas in the latter, consciousness has the power to become its own object of attention, conscious of its own self in reflection. It is not as if the act offers no material to reflection, only that reflection cannot 'find' the act, because the intentionality that is characteristic of the act is displaced by reflection.

Because of the self-enclosed nature of this reflection it courts the danger (as with the cardinal sin of idealism) of continual self-referral and consequent isolation. W. Biemel writes in Heidegger, *An illustrated study* (1977, 37): 'The primacy of mere knowing is an illusion of the epistemologist'. Such an illusion can have the profoundest soteriological consequences, and as a better/alternative path, we saw in an earlier chapter how for Bonhoeffer, free participation in the work of a community speaks responsively to the issue of the fundamental isolation of the knowing 'I'. However, the main premise for human self-understanding which Bonhoeffer put forward in part B

of *Act and Being* is that of revelation in Christ. Building further on his work in *SC*, he pointed out that the pathway to liberation from the violation of reality represented by a framework grafted around the autonomous, isolated I, which, centred around the omnicompetence of the knowing mind, understands everything from itself, is one which travels of necessity via the *Lichtung* of the Christian community. Heidegger had chosen the word *Dasein* to describe human being as meaning not just 'being there' but human being as a self-understanding of human possibilities. Making the Heidgeggerian phrase his own, Bonhoeffer argued that it is the Community of faith, the *Gemeinde*, which is the place of genuine *Daseinsverständnis*, where people understand themselves from revelation, (DBW 2: 108) and not, by contrast, out of their own autonomous self-understanding. In this theology Christ, as the revelation and the reconciling act of God, is the *Kollektivperson* of the church as the new humanity.

But what Bonhoeffer takes on from Heidegger may be more than the citations, and the adoption/re-working of *Dasein*, indicate. It has been observed in Bonhoeffer scholarship that to make assumptions about the pattern of Bonhoeffer's thought, judging only by the traceability of his reading matter, his written notes and output, might well not do the subject justice. My reading is that Bonhoeffer draws deeply on Heideggerian thinking, in ways that will be outlined below, but it is also apparent that his intuition is much at work, distancing him from Heidegger himself and from strands of connections that would within a short period of 3-4 years become deeply unhelpful. On the helpful side, towards an emerging theology of work, Heidegger makes significant connections between work, usability and purpose with which Bonhoeffer would have resonated at a profound level. In *Being and Time* Heidegger writes (1967, 99):

> The shoe which is to be produced is for wearing: the clock which is manufactured is for telling the time. The work which we chiefly encounter in our concernful dealings - the work that is to be found when we are 'at work' on something - has a usability which belongs to it essentially: in this usability it lets us encounter already the 'towards-which' for which it is usable.

Heidegger also stresses (100) the fact that any work with which one concerns oneself is ready-to-hand not only in the domestic world of the workshop but also in the *public* world. Hence Bonhoeffer, sharing Heidegger's reservations about conscience, would also have had a great affinity with Heidegger's basic premise that in fact the philosopher is not one who *reflects* on the world but who is *in* the world. For both Heidegger and Bonhoeffer, to 'think being' one must 'live it,'and Being, rooted in time, is 'being-in-the-world'. There 'is' nowhere else. The two are still close on the sense in which thought, *dianonia*, and thought alone, actualizes both being and what is opposed to being, behind which lies Fichte's insight (Steiner, 1978, 55) that 'Thought is the

sustaining and determining ground of being'. In a helpfully insightful paragraph, Steiner picks up on this theme (1978, 55):

> But 'ground' entails a downward movement: as soon as being realizes itself as an idea, as soon as essence is 'idealised', the arrow points upward. It points, inevitably, to 'ought' to the category of the exemplary, the prototypical, the teleological, and obligatory. In the realm of 'ideas' essents are endowed with a purpose, a future-directed rationality, a 'should'.

This touches closely on the subject of usefulness and purpose which is so characteristic for Bonhoeffer, and it is a subject to which he would return later in 1940, notably in writing about the mandates. A section of chapter 7 will, accordingly, discuss this motif. It is one which reflected his deep sense at that time (and which would further evolve) of work taking priority over the personal. For Heidegger the arrow might point horizontally towards death, whereas for Bonhoeffer, the arrow would point upwards towards Christ and horizontally out to others, interpreted by ethics, and increasingly, directed through work. In this sense anthropology meets with, and is defined by, Christology. But for this to become possible, a transformation has to take place in the believer's attitudes, and certainly Bonhoeffer would stand shoulder to shoulder with Heidegger in facing up to the non-being which defines *Dasein* in what is involved in such a change. Inexorably, *Dasein* has to come to a sense that something is awry in our being-there-in-the-world: it has to become *anxious*. That in the face of which one has anxiety is characterized by the fact that what threatens it is *nowhere*. In *Being and Time* (1967, 232) Heidegger writes: 'this means that Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious'. We human beings are afraid of the disclosure of our own shadow. It was not only Bonhoeffer and Heidegger who, at the time of writing, were in a similar place on this theme. This 'facing up to reality' is very much at the heart of what was concurrently pre-occupying Emil Brunner. In his 'eristic' theology, whose primary task, as he saw it, was the shattering of people's illusory self-understandings, the pathway to hope was to abandon the uninvolved, unconcerned attitude of the 'spectator', and adopt an 'existential' attitude. Such an attitude, as defined by Emil Brunner, is captured by Bruce McCormack in the passage (1995, 403):

> an 'existential' attitude by contrast is one in which the person is passionately concerned about the problem of her own existence. For such a person, the problem of existence has become the life-or-death question of meaning. To compel this shift in attitude, eristics has to demonstrate to the opponent that a fundamental contradiction pervades her entire life, because she is not able to be what she wants to be, from which she cannot deliver herself. Despair sets in.

Hence there is a deeply shared link with Brunner between Bonhoeffer and Heidegger on the subject of facing up to reality via existential thinking in the sense of its leading via or to a place or

destination of despair. Bonhoeffer anticipated much that would become foundational in existentialist thinking with his emphasis on the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent, determining his or her own development through acts of the will, and, as we have seen, how that will is shaped as it encounters resistance, both internal and external, is for Bonhoeffer at the very centre of how we encounter life. Perhaps it was also true of Bonhoeffer that the fundamental contradiction pervading his own life was the way in which he was going about prioritizing work over the leanings of his heart. He was close to the thinking of the Pascalian-Lutheran mindset with its stress on despair and *Angst* [fear] and *Sorge* [worry, care, or concern], with its affirmation of the nearness and time-governing presence of death, that for Heidegger fused *Sein* and *Zeit* into oneness. At a deep level Bonhoeffer would have been in tune with this Heideggerian stress on human rootedness in the concrete, temporal world. He would have welcomed Heidegger's insight, summarized by Steiner, that (Steiner, 1978, 78):

> instead of the Platonic 'illumination from outside' with its archetypal reaching out to an object along an exploratory light ray, we shall have what Heidegger calls '*Die Lichtung'*, the 'clearing', in which truth is experienced, not perceived, as part and parcel of the facticity and historicity of human existence.

But for Heidegger, the consequences of insight led to a radically different pathway. This paragraph concludes: 'we must labour not only to reach this clearing, but to dwell in it'. What that dwelling would mean for Heidegger when the test of Nazism emerged would become lastingly apparent in the most unfortunate of ways. Steiner's observation (1978, 23) is telling:

> Heidegger's career, with its rootedness in one place, with its almost total refusal, certainly after February 1934, of external eventuality or contingency, poses and exemplifies the very rare, indeed troubling case of a human existence invested wholly in abstract thought.

Helpfully almost the exact opposite can be said of Bonhoeffer, whose fondness for travel and whose work, thanks in large measure to his intuition, would lead him not only to different people and places and all which that brought with it, but also to move on from the world of abstract thought. Thanks to his Sloane scholarship to Union seminary, he would depart for the USA on September 6th, 1930. That same month he gave a lecture in which he suggested to the US students that there are two great premises for our work, first that real peacemakers should love their homes better than all, a poignant remark given that his parents were moved to spend two hours on the boat saying farewell to him, and second (DBW 10: 390) 'Keep your eyes open and most important keep open –your hearts. Today as never before nations are preparing for war'. By Christmas Bonhoeffer had seen enough to conclude that (DBW 10: 401) 'the strong banks are the principal masters of America'. It was an insight about life and work which would far outlive him. Meanwhile his own vocational thoughts were turning increasingly towards pastoral ministry (cf. DBW 10: 222). He

returned home to Germany in July 1931, in the context of the steepest rise in unemployment ever experienced in German history, to be ordained into a rapidly changing German environment.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the thread of Bonhoeffer's work journey as his life and experiences have continued to deepen his thinking about work. The chapter has noted his choice to prioritise work over a relationship with Elizabeth Zinn which may, had he not made this choice, have developed in the direction of marriage. In this chapter's section on *Act and Being* we saw that Bonhoeffer made the point that the pathway to liberation from the violation of reality represented by a framework grafted around the autonomous, isolated I, which, centred around the omnicompetence of the knowing mind, understands everything from itself, travels of necessity via the *Lichtung* of the Christian community. The chapter has made the connection between Bonhoeffer's life and writing by asking whether Bonhoeffer was in fact experiencing something akin to a Kierkegaardian despair as he chose to give this community priority at some personal cost. The next chapter will examine how this came to be articulated as responsible theological work, a phase in which Bonhoeffer's life underwent a significant shift.

Chapter 5: '*Verantwortliche theologische Arbeit*'

Introduction

This chapter introduces the importance of 'order' in society, and how the concept came to be abused in Germany. It challenges the prevailing understanding surrounding the 'change' that came over Bonhoeffer sometime in 1932 by suggesting that the change may well have had its roots more profoundly in the ordination service of November 1931 than has hitherto been understood. More significantly, the chapter traces the work thread of Bonhoeffer's life in such a way that it becomes clear that when the hermeneutical key of work is applied to an understanding of Bonhoeffer, two insights in particular are gained: first, there is considerable light shed on the un-solved question as to when in 1932 his life took a 'turn', and second, the chapter will argue that it is in Bonhoeffer's articulation of the job of responsible theological work that he voiced the call to his own life's work. In this chapter I will argue that Bonhoeffer's interaction with the Theses of Stählin illustrate the development of this process and assert that the fact that it 'became personal' for Bonhoeffer strongly influenced his formative theology, and marked a significant new stage in his commitment to resistance. Further, it will be suggested, this interaction is likely to have provided the impetus for the choice of subject matter for the seminal series of lectures on Genesis during the autumn of 1932 (with which this chapter is principally concerned). The chapter will also go on to suggest that in addition, Bonhoeffer was somewhat more influenced by Brunner in 1932 than has been credited heretofore, and that the combination of these two factors contributed in great measure both to Bonhoeffer's own work journey and to the project of resistance to bad work. The chapter closes by drawing particular attention to the less well known and disturbing fact that it was the work of the clergy in Germany which provided the practical architecture for the Nazi Government's implementation of their racist ideological policies. On hearing of this, Bonhoeffer said the clergy should go on strike, as complying with this process was bad work that should be resisted. The fact that Bonhoeffer took this stand and was ignored introduces, it is suggested, for him a 'new irrelevance' for theology and provided the need for a fundamental reappraisal of what form his life's work should take. However it is also significant for the development of this thesis as a whole that Bonhoeffer himself soon reached a separate low point in an area related to this precise challenge: it came when he chose to decline to take the funeral of a Jewish relative in April 1933, on the advice of his superintendent. In this light it is a subject of little wonder that his call to fellow pastors (De Gruchy, 1997, 252ff.) 'they should go on strike' was ignored at that time in 1933 when he himself was unable to resist the directive of his own supervisor. In a sense, thus, the key to understanding the phrase is in the word 'they', which shows that for all his academic excellence, it was still 'advice for others' and not grounded in his own, integrated discipleship as yet. The chapter discusses the importance of the word '*Entzweiung*'[being split in two] in this respect. The significance of this combination of experience and events demonstrates that by 1933 Bonhoeffer

had not yet entirely worked out what order would look like when deeply respected and hitherto trusted lines and channels of authority would, in a most un-German-like fashion, have to be disobeyed, and that this crucial order-related aspect of his work theology was still very much in the process of being formed.

Order and manipulation

In 1934, writing in *Oppression and Liberty*, Simone Weil (1988, 168) reflected that: 'Today, after being bemused for several centuries with pride in technical achievement, we have forgotten the existence of a divine order of the universe'.

Her insight was that order is a primary need of the human soul. It was a subject close to the heart of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. It was also a subject which, because of its affinity with social order, work and unemployment, was immensely high on the priority list of the National Socialist regime, and a particular area in which they wished to present themselves to maximum advantage. As early as 1923, as captured by Kele in *Nazis and workers - National Socialist appeals to German Labour, 1919-1933,* Goebbels was successfully presenting his party as the capable architects of an *orderly* working future (1972, 132):

> Goebbels explained that the NSDAP was a party of workers because it took the concept of labour out of its pejorative context and elevated it to an honourable position. The Nazi according to Goebbels wanted to judge the value of labour on the basis of achievement rather than money as the liberals did. Goebbels lamented: 'the worker in the capitalistic state is - and that is his misfortune - no longer a living human being, not an originator, not a creator. He is changed into a machine, a number, a robot in a factory without sense or understanding'. He promised that national socialism would take the worker out of his humdrum existence and give him dignity and that the Nazis would classify as workers all who work [*schafft oder arbeitet*].

It was a seductive appeal, an early drawing of the idea of an orderly and meaningful work life into the National Socialist web of deceit. It was an appeal entirely without integrity, and the importance to the individual and to society of discerning a lack of integrity versus living a life of integrity will become readily apparent as this thesis progresses. But the appeal would to some extent hit its mark, given that the entire social order of Germany (and the world) was in crisis, a crisis that would deepen still further in the short term. The crisis encompassed every area and level, and was felt at its most poignant level in the area of work. As soon as power was in their hands, the Nazi party

would deliver massive results on the availability of work and the provision of order. Lovin has captured something of the tremendous irony of this accurately in *Christian faith and public choices* (1984, 89):

> In contrast to the political and economic chaos that followed the first world war, Hitler provided plenty of order. The economy was stabilised, political disturbances were suppressed, and the trains, as they say, ran on time.

The backdrop to this is that by the late 1920s, almost every area of thought, including particularly theology, at every level, was exposed and vulnerable to assault. The liberal contributions of the 19th Century had helped facilitate the drawing in of theology into an association with contemporary culture so close that the failures of the first world war became also the failings of theological thought. For Germany the defeat had become a spiritual issue of the first magnitude. People were dizzy with not knowing where to turn so that in the widest sense, confusion reigned. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard comments on this subject, in relation to his own era, on this sense of dizziness. The way he sees it is that it is as if the expanse of thinking is so vast, that when people deal with the greater issues of life in such an inadequate fashion, then metaphysically they end up operating in confusion. He writes in *Fear and Trembling* (1994, 221):

> A physician has explained somewhere that it was seasickness the French soldiers died of in Russia, produced by the fact that there was nothing before the eye in the endless breadth of the plain. When therefore one notices that one is becoming dizzy one may stop it by catching upon something with the eye ... so it is with physical dizziness. The dizzy is the wide, the endless, the unlimited, the boundless: and dizziness itself is the boundlessness of the senses ... the remedy for dizziness is therefore limitation: and, spiritually understood, all discipline is limitation ... salvation from all dizziness, spiritually understood, is essentially to seek the ethical, which by qualitative dialectic disciplines and limits the individual and establishes her task.

But Kierkegaard sees that there is a way out of this confusion. For him, this 'highest level confusion' serves as a way in to the ethical, leading us to inadequacy and despair, but ultimately to God, and raising the subject of boundaries and limitations. Hence, in line with all that has been mentioned above, there was in Germany and throughout Europe a wider and often un-met need for just those the boundaries which might be provided by good theological thought at all levels, especially in the area of ethics, and in theological thinking about social order, which is so much bounded by work. Given that the Lutheran Church in Germany, like the Christian Church as a whole, was not famous for doing its best theological thinking in the area of work, it was ill prepared for what was to come, in what transpired to be a fundamental turning upside down of

previous convictions. In that assault, theological thinking about social order and in particular 'orders of creation', which had as much of its natural foundation the thought of Martin Luther from the 1530s, would come under the spotlight. In the searching light of that experience, theology and almost all other areas of life would prove, as the National Socialists came to power, to be both too readily available to provide its services to an evil regime, or too easily open to adroit manipulation. The controlling order of society itself became the problem that needed to be resisted. Bonhoeffer had the intuition and insight to resist much of this manipulation, but this chapter will show how when it mattered, theology hardly helped, Bonhoeffer himself had some deeper engagement to make, and the case for resistance to bad work had to be made in an ever more costly way.

Bonhoeffer's work journey

The period 1931-1933 provided some key inputs to Bonhoeffer as he made his own journey from the somewhat exclusive heights of academic work to the more engaged role in London of 'non-compliant' pastor. In my analysis the signs are there in the autumn of 1931, as wave upon wave of news of global financial disaster broke upon the ears of ordinary workers, that he was ruminating deeply on the subject of the practical usefulness of theology, which up till that point had seemed to be his chosen pathway of productivity. This observation brings with it the related sense that at a deeper level Bonhoeffer, quite apart from attending Conferences entitled *'Das Wesen der Arbeit*' [The essence of work] and '*Das kapitalistische Wirtschaftssystem und die Arbeitslosigkeit*' [The capitalist system and unemployment], was starting to reflect profoundly upon the nature of work and what role he was being called to play in it. With some friends Bonhoeffer shared his thoughts instinctively at a deeper level, and his Swiss colleague Erwin Sutz is notable in this respect. It is to Sutz that Bonhoffer articulated the (for himself) key vocational question in October of 1931 as he mused over the seriousness and indeed desperate nature of the German unemployment situation, causing 20 million people to go hungry, as he asked: (DBW 11, 28) 'So what's all one's theology for then?' He will have agreed profoundly with Hermann Sasse's assessment, in an article published that year in '*Kirchliches Jahrbuch*'. It was a piece in which he resolutely took Karl Barth's side on one particular question, in which Sasse stated (Scholder, 1977, 125):

> a fatal chasm has opened up between theology and the practical work of the Church … the substantive work of rebuilding the Church and the profound theological work of the last decade stand side by side, with virtually no connection between them.

Bonhoeffer's 'turn' in 1932

The course of lectures (the principal subject matter of this chapter) which was by popular demand soon published as *Creation and Fall* began on Tuesday November 8th 1932 and ended on Tuesday February 21st 1933. It thus encompassed Hitler's accession to the Chancellorship of Germany that January. The significance of the hour was not lost on Bonhoeffer, and although he could not have forseen at that stage the extent to which his life would be determined, and ultimately, ended, by Hitler's regime, it is remarkable how that year was also a significant year for Bonhoeffer in terms of his own Christian formation. Later, writing from Finkenwalde in 1936, he would look back on it and write: 'I came to the Bible for the first time' (DBW 14: 113). In fact there seems to be general agreement that there was a turn in Bonhoeffer's life at some point during the year 1932, and that this turn took place before the winter semester of that year began. It was a turn which so profoundly influenced his outlook on life and his theology that the editors' afterword in DBWE 3 is able to state: (DBWE 3: 173) 'For Bonhoeffer the knowledge of death and resurrection had become a truth of the utmost certainty already at some moment during 1932'. Two suggestions in particular emerge here. First, the possible source of such a shift may have been due to the change in his self-perception as a worker, one which in fact may have begun more directly as a result of his ordination in November 1931 to the role of deacon, and the effect of which was compounded by the events and impacts of 1932 which I shall outline below. Second, in tracing the work-related thread of the influences of 1932, it transpires that the timing of the turn which took place may be located somewhere between July and November, and relate strongly to the subject of work with which this thesis is concerned.

The significance of Bonhoeffer's Ordination

As a background to the first suggestion, a helpful perspective on Bonhoeffer is provided by Carl Friedrich von Weizäcker, the well-known physicist and philosopher, originally given at a commemoration of Bonhoeffer in Geneva ,Switzerland in 1976 and cited by Schliepensingen (2010, 9):

> Dietrich Bonhoeffer was one of those *homines religiosi* who makes the decision to offer themselves to God early in childhood, in a way that escapes the observation of their fellows. Certainly there were theological precursors in that cultivated, liberal, upper middle-class family, in its well-ordered but free family life, evening prayers with the children were still customary although Sunday church-going was no longer the practice … A child can, without detriment to his natural development as a child, have a silent and intensive life with God in which the environment only provides him with the culturally distinctive patterns in which he can interpret and cultivate this inner experience. Some

such experience, begun in childhood and probably never disclosed to another human soul was, it seems to me, the vital spring of DB's entire life, right until his death.

Von Weizäcker makes the point that there could be a privacy for Bonhoeffer about the real depth of his inner life. In connection with this assertion, , I have obtained[21] a copy of the ordination service in German such as was likely to have been used on the occasion of Bonheoffer's ordination. On reading through the wording the reader is moved by the depth and profundity of the promises made in relation to work by the candidates at such an hour in Germany. One paragraph in particular spoken by the presiding superintendent twice uses the phrase 'workers in God's harvest' and my sense is that it is exactly this work-related thread which may have resonated profoundly with the deeper chords in Bonhoeffer's life. The paragraph (cited from the pdf with my translation and bold emphases) runs:

> Ordinator: *Allmächtiger, gütiger Gott und Vater, der Du durch Deinen lieben Sohn uns*
> Almighty, good and gracious God and Father, who have commanded us through your
> *befohlen hast, daß wir Dich bitten sollen,* ***Arbeiter*** *in Deine Ernte zu senden, wir bitten*
> dear Son Jesus Christ that we should ask you to send workers into your harvest, we pray
> *dich vom Herzen, Du wollest allen, die du zu* ***Arbeitern*** *in Deinen Ernte berufen hast,*
> to you with all our hearts that you might deign to bestow on all whom you have called
> *Deinen heiligen Geist reichlich verleihen, und sonderlich diesen Deinen Dienern, die*
> to be workers in your harvest a rich measure of your Holy Spirit, and especially upon
> these your servants, who wish to be confirmed in their call to the office of preaching,
> *zum Predigtamt bestätigt werden wollen, dein Wort im Herz und Mund legen, daß Sie es*
> to place your word in their hearts and upon their lips, that they may proclaim it with all
> *mit aller Freudigkeit und Beständigkeit verkündigen, auch ihr Amt durch einen*
> joy and measure, and to adorn their office with a holy and gracious change, so that your
> *gottseligen Wandel zieren, damit Deine heilige christliche Gemeinde dadurch erhalten*
> holy Christian Church-Community may thereby be sustained and further built up,
> *und erbaut werde durch Jesum Christum, Amen.*
> through Jesus Christ, Amen.

Particularly in the light of Von Weizäcker's point it seems feasible to suggest (particularly at a time when the writing of historical conjecture as a genre is much in fashion)that a significant contribution to the turning point in Bonhoeffer may have been none other than his private sense during his ordination of the operative work of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands and

[21] With grateful thanks to Dr C. Tietz.

through this powerful, simple and moving prayer for a 'holy and gracious change' which was to provide the direction, call and work focus for the remainder of his life. Reading through Bethge's understated reporting (Bethge, 2000*,* 222) of how the service felt for Bonhoeffer seems a good example of the way a more introverted personality type might react to something deeply moving, passing it off with a shrug, and giving few external clues as to its significance, other than those that could be clearly discerned by his subsequent priorities in the preparing of candidates for the significance of ordination in no uncertain terms at Finkenwalde later in 1936. Schliepensingen (2010, 103) also notes the very low-key nature of the event itself, and would I sense concur with the thought that Bonhoeffer would be unlikely to be numbered among the self-congratulatory clergy who celebrate the anniversaries of their ordination. But ordination is (*Book of Common Prayer*) an 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace', and it seems to me that the significance of Bonhoeffer's ordination as a preparatory part of what is deemed to have happened in 1932 has hitherto remainded undocumented, and that situation should be addressed precisely because of its significance for his calling and life's work, and as an integral part of acknowledging that how Bonhoeffer related to life through work has until now been undervalued.

Tracing the thread of Bonhoeffer's work journey

On the second contention, there is more to the story of 1932 to consider. Given that it was such a significant year for Bonhoeffer, it is important at this point to stand back in order to trace the thread of the journey he was on, particularly in relation to work. The table below, which will serve as a guide map for the continuation of this chapter as a whole, summarises key moments in this respect:

The theme of work, personal and theological, in 1932 for Bonhoeffer			
Date	DBW ref	Event	Significant out-take for or from Bonhoeffer
March 1932		Brunner signs preface to *The Divine Imperative*	
4.4.1932	DBW 11: 88	Epsom meeting Youth Secretariat	Sense of work being '*überflüssig*' [superfluous]
11.4.1932		Bonhoeffer meets Barth in Berlin	Encouraging but challenging
April 1932	DBW 11	Interactions with Stählin on Theses	Extremely disconcerting and disturbing
8.5.1932	DBW 11: 89	Sermon on 2 Chronicles 20:12 '*Ratlosigkeit and Nichtwissen*' before the hidden-ness of the Divine Command (on work)	B subsequently writes that he offloaded profound despair into his sermon 'We don't know what to do but our eyes are on you'

17.5.1932	DBW 11: 89ff.	Seizes on Brunner's book and reads in depth	Initial burst of exuberance disappointed
20.7.1932	DBW 11: 349	Words of Welcome to *Ciernohorske Kupele*	Nazism is invading the churches as well: *the job of responsible theological work, supported by the ecumenical world is to strengthen and support that proportion of Germans and Christians in Germany who are fighting against Hitler*
Oct 1932	DBW 11: 464	Private Baptism of nephew	'Love the day and its work'
29.10.1932	DBW 11: 363	Literary draft on '*Beruf*'	(Cited in Ch 1: B recalls a key moment of call)
Nov 1932	DBW 3	Creation and Fall lectures	Students were so attentive you could hear a pin drop: they were bathed in sweat from note-taking. Bonhoeffer on form
7.12.1932	DBWE 3:155	Hilde Pfeiffer writes a crucial note from Augustine	The note is about '*Entzweiung*' having vanished and refers to a creature who is one and undivided

What this table makes clear is that as Bonhoeffer started to engage the more intently with a theology of work, as he did throughout the year and notably in *Creation and Fall*, it 'became personal' for him, after, in particular, his interactions with Stählin, and his reading of Brunner. This chapter will examine these significant issues diachronically, and move on to a fuller discussion of the 'work journey' Bonhoeffer was on, which is captured in this summary.

Wilhem Stählin and the Orders of Creation Theses

Bonhoeffer helped to organise an ecumenical conference in Berlin in April 1932 and at this conference Professor Wilhelm Stählin presented a set of theses which used the 'Orders of Creation' as a basis. In so doing Stählin was not out of line with mainstream theological thinking, and even Karl Barth, previously not an advocate of the concept, had begun to use it afresh. Paul Nimmo picks this out in the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, (Vol 60.1), writing that:

> In 1928-9 (in Münster) and in 1930-1 (in Bonn) Karl Barth delivered a series of lectures on ethics. On both occasions, Barth espouses a theology which contains a concept of 'orders of creation'. He asserts that there exist *orders of creation* i.e., orders that come directly into question (and more than that) with the fact of our life itself as representatives of *the* order, as a creaturely standard and basis of knowledge of the will of the Creator, as

> words which we cannot possibly overlook in obedience to *the* Word because they are set on our lips and in our hearts as direct testimonies to the word.

However, Stählin built on that 'orders of creation' foundation to provide a 'justification of war between the nations'. The argument ran that God's command was to be discovered in certain given orders which were regarded as having been created by God, and hence were 'very good' (Genesis 1:31, NIV). Extending the logic of this thinking, it was possible to start with any contemporary agenda, such as '*Volk*', class struggle, or even race, and maneouvre into the framework, by suggesting that they were 'given', the flawed notion that this was an order created by God so that the 'good' promise of Genesis could be claimed for that polemic. Bonhoeffer for his part disagreed wholeheartedly with Stählin throughout the conference, and during the course of the exchanges, his objections to the way the orders of creation theology was being applied, as well as his objections to those individuals who mis-applied theology in this fashion, became increasingly clear, as can be seen from the table below, which I cite in full. This is primarily because in detailing how it 'got personal' with Stählin, we see how influential this exchange proved to be for Bonhoeffer, and correspondingly, this thesis will argue that this contributed to Bonhoeffer's emerging thinking on the mandates in a significant way (DBW 11: 316 ff):

Stählin's *Thesen*, *Die Eiche*, 20:328-332 (1932), *Die Einheit der Christlichen Kirche und die Völker - Main Conference Report*		
These Nr.	Content	Bonhoeffer (verbal) Comment (minuted)
2	The emerging body of knowledge as to the fateful differences between the Nations and the thereby-founded call to arms [*Kampfesaufgabe*] draws strength from the protest against the intellectual underestimation of the circumstances of destiny [*Schicksalhafter Gegebenheiten*] as such and against the un-christian ideal of unity with which the world of the Nations is confronted.	The whole concept of orders of creation is flawed as is its application to this discussion. It is not possible to pick out and prioritise certain circumstances in the world as orders of creation and use them as a founding basis for Christian-moral actions. All of this is only possible when the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is adopted as the point of departure, which has not been the case here ... in These 2 what is under discussion instead of the natural variation in conditions brought about through being part of the created order, is 'circumstances of destiny'. But the concept of fate, or destiny, if at all it is to have a place in theology, assumes the condition of the fall into sin. Hence 'circumstances of destiny' and situations coming to pass through being part of the created order are entirely different things.
3	The unity of the Christian Church as the people of God called forth from amongst all the Nations cancels out neither the call to arms [*Kampfesaufgabe*] which results from the differences between the nations, nor that which derives from the world being as it is.	Stählin's distinction between diversity among the nations and divisions among them is untenable. How then are we to account for language, (see Gen 11) which as diversity then becomes a foundation for division? Yet precisely on the assumption of this being an order of creation, is based the justification of the [*Kampfesaufgabe*] call to arms between nations in Theses 3 and 5.
5	As long as Nations threaten or harm others in their needed *Lebensraum* or in the development of their destiny, so long does the strife for the life and freedom of one's own nation count among the duties to which we, in our earthly situation, are bound: belonging to the Christian Church does not cancel out these obligations, rathermore, it sends us afresh to that earthly place where we have to make good our obedience and faith.	
6	In this situation we deny the unity of the Church, when we place faith as the driving force in the service of national self-preservation: if we close ourselves off in the message of Christ and his kingdom from the chance to experience the fullness of the *Volk* will to live: if we cut off nationally-voted-for churches from the unity of the whole Christian Church: if we make into one and the same thing our fight for our own Nationvolk and the battle for the cause of God and Christ, we deny the unity of the church.	If the call to arms arises from obedience to God's orders of creation, why then should not anyone present their conflict as a conflict for the cause of God? At this point one must question whether the reliability of one's trust in the orders of creation is not in fact completely shattered....it would be better to introduce the concept of 'Orders of preservation' under God, the difference being, that whereas with the concept of orders of creation ,certain orders or circumstances can be regarded as 'very good' with the concept of 'Orders of preservation', by contrast, what is meant is that every circumstance is only a circumstance sustained by God in anger and mercy in the light of God's revelation in Christ. Every order under the sustaining hand of God is directed towards Christ and only remains so on his account. An order only continues to be regarded as an order of preservation so long as it is open to the proclamation of the Gospel. Wherever an order, even if it seems the longest-established, like marriage, Volk, etc, is closed to this proclamation, it must be relinquished.
7	By contrast (looking at it the other way around) we confess to the unity of the Christian Church [....] when with Christians of other nations, even those with whom we are entangled in conflict, we hold to Christian solidarity, which finds its decisive expression in the fellowship of prayer and the sacraments.	

An immediate observation here is the way in which in a theological context, Bonhoeffer's workplace, highly charged words like *Kampfesaufgabe* and *schicksalhafte Gegebenheiten* were adopted, used and applied by a senior establishment figure, no less than a Professor. One of the other most notable features of the conference period, where Bonhoeffer appears to have had the last word on more than one occasion, was that Stählin specifically disagreed with Bonhoeffer on the subject of orders of creation (DBW 11: 325) being only recognised through Christ, whereas Luther describes all the estates as having been established and instituted by God with the blood and death of Christ (cf. *The Christian in Society II* , LW 45: III-104). Another is that at the same time, Stählin twice used the phrase 'un-christian', a broad and judgemental phrase. This same individual

also accused Bonhoeffer in public of adhering to weakling-pacifist [*weichlich-pazifistisch*] ideas, to which Bonhoeffer, despite the fact that this would have been deeply stinging for him, given how seriously he engaged with the Christian message of peace, responded calmly and with firmness (DBW 11: 327). It seems likely that a real crossing of swords in public with a theological opponent (one who initially was hugely enthusiastic about Bonhoeffer and who continued to be supportive up to a point[22] in the coming years) may also have been significant for Bonhoeffer at this early stage in terms of his own journey and in his theological thinking. Here was a man, a senior representative figure of the Church herself, who purported to be doing the right thing, fighting for the validation of ecumenical work at a time when this valuable project was under fierce attack within Germany, in theory on the same team as Bonhoeffer, (who for his own part had specifically taken on a work role aligned with that objective) actually undermining the wider cause by bringing to bear an inappropriate theological agenda. It was to prove a work experience for Bonhoeffer which proved seminal in preparing him to resist the bad work of the very source of his employment in later roles, a deeply challenging path to follow at any time, as the concept of honour and loyalty are entwined with the worker's sense of reluctance to 'bite the hand that feeds,' a reluctance which Bonhoeffer would struggle with and, finally, overcome. As a sign of the way things were going to develop, Stählin's opposition to Bonhoeffer became increasingly personal from this point onwards, and it appears that this played a crucial role in crystallising Bonhoeffer's understanding of 'where to go from here'. Not only that, but also it seems that the significance of this exchange may indeed have been the stimulus for Bonhoeffer's choice during the ultra-short summer term of 1932 of subject matter for what would prove his watershed series of lectures entitled *Creation and Fall*. The editors' afterword to DBWE 3 indicates that this choice had to be made during the summer term of 1932 in order to be announced in advance for the autumn semester, and it seems reasonable to suggest that something 'clicked' within Bonhoeffer in relation to this event, and that he decided to do something about it.

The Orders of Creation as initially outlined by Luther were here (by Stählin) being used inappropriately to justify a spirit of warmongery. Bonhoeffer's deep connection with, and grounding in, Lutheran thought, would have railed against this misrepresentation. Bonhoeffer had drawn deeply on Luther's Commentary on Genesis by way of preparation for the series. In the light of the earlier commentary on some of the background of Lutheran thinking on the orders of creation and work itself, it appears curious to the modern eye that the integrity and depth of Luther could be so misrepresented, but it must be noted in fairness that the extent of the 'gathering storm' in terms of the catastrophies that lay so near ahead, had hardly revealed itself at this stage. The unhelpfulness at that time of this overall misrepresentation, as well as others, of Luther, was

[22] Schliepensingen documents a very sad moment in 1943 when Stählin asks Maria von Wedemayer to absent herself from her own home in Pätzig rather than being 'forced to choose between her family and her fiancé' (2010, 340).

intense, not only sowing confusion and discouragement amongst Christian believers, but also by association tarnishing Luther's name and having the effect of alienating Christians from the value of Lutheran thought. In a further related aspect, this worked at a national (and international) level within Germany and beyond, providing ready fuel for further corruption and headline material for the rapidly emerging war-mongering elements within a German society smarting from the humiliation of Versailles (and an impossibly large reparations burden) and a European continent pregnant with potential fracture lines.

Consequently the report, edited by Bonhoeffer, on the Berlin Conference, noted amidst the diverse ideas which are expressed, his own view that the idea of an order of creation was advanced on a 'dangerous and fallacious basis' (DBW 11: 324), one which should be replaced with the concept of 'orders of preservation'. The German word is *Erhaltung* which carries a strong sense of God's sustaining grace as opposed merely to 'preservation' (as in the static sense of the phrase 'preservation of the status quo'), and translators of the phrase have not always been able to bring this to the English reader's attention. Throughout these discussions, the influence of Luther on Bonhoeffer's thought can be clearly discerned. A constant theme in Luther is the sustaining and preserving grace of God, by whose mercy we live and move and have our being. In his work on Genesis, for example, we find, in *Luther's Works, Vol. 1*(*Lectures on Genesis*, LW 1: 74):

> Thus the solution is easy. God rested from His work, that is, He was satisfied with the heaven and earth which had then been created by the Word; He did not create a new heaven, a new earth, new stars, new trees. And yet God works till now—if indeed He has not abandoned the world which was once established but governs and preserves it through the effectiveness of His Word. He has, therefore, ceased to establish; but He has not ceased to govern. In Adam the human race had its beginning; in the earth the animal race, to use this expression, had its beginning through the Word; and in the sea that of the fish and of the birds had its beginning. But in Adam and in the first little beasts or animals they did not reach their end. Until today there abides the Word which was pronounced over the human race: "Grow and multiply"; there abides the Word: "Let the sea bring forth fish and birds of the heaven." Almighty, therefore, is the power and effectiveness of the Word which thus preserves and governs the entire creation.

It seems possible or perhaps likely that Bonhoeffer may have been influenced towards using the word '*Erhaltung'* in his proposed 'Orders of Sustaining Grace' as mentioned above simply through his profound knowledge of Luther. This is the case particularly if we read Luther's citation above with Christ as the Word (John 1:1) through whom all things were created, at the heart of our understanding. Bonhoeffer initially brings this somewhat more helpful phrase into use in his seminar (DBW 11: 312) '*Gibt es eine Christliche Ethik*?' in the summer semester of 1932 and also

in his lecture of July 26th 1932 (DBW 11: 327-44) '*A Theological Basis for the World Alliance'*. In his lecture at the international ecumenical youth conference on peace at Ciernohorské Kúpele later, in July 1932, Bonhoeffer continued in similar vein. He refuted the notion that a current agenda item can come under an 'eternal' order of God (DBW 11: 335-38) by stating that such orders are 'not eternal, but subject to change'.[23] Through his adoption of the phrase 'orders of *Erhaltung*/ sustaining grace' Bonhoeffer suggests less rigidity in God's intended bringing of order to society. Rather than viewing creation as a *creatio continua*, a world continually wrested anew out of nothingness, Bonhoeffer chose at this point to portray God's on-going relationship with the fallen creation as one of *'Erhaltung'*, meaning both upholding and preservation. Bonhoeffer, like Luther, was of the opinion that although the fallen-ness of creation is real, that does not erase its original goodness (DBW 3: 44, my italics, but reflecting the emphasis within the German text):

> The world, which 'once-and-for-all' was wrested from nothingness, is *upheld* in its being. That which was created out of nothing and called forth into being is kept in place through God's look. It does not, at the moment of becoming, sink back again; instead, God looks at it and sees that it is good, and God's look, resting upon God's work, *upholds* that work in being. Thus the world is upheld only by the one who is its Creator and only for the one who is its Creator. It is upheld not for its own sake but because of God's look. But the work that is *upheld* is still good work.

He also added that these orders of sustaining grace derive their value 'wholly from outside themselves, from Christ, from the new creation', making clear that for him the founding basis for ethics is Christ Himself. A commandment of Christ is (DBW 11: 335-38) 'limited by nothing else, by no so-called orders of creation'. However, as the lecture series unfolded, it became clear that even the substitute working concept of the 'orders of sustaining grace' would not long take centre stage in Bonhoeffer's thought. How could these orders, even being subject to Christ, be made useful when what was at stake was a different world view and a fundamentally different interpretation of reality? He alluded to the fact that this was an unfinished product in his Christological thought processes when he wrote: (DBW 3: 129) 'None of these orders, however, has any eternal character, for all are there only to uphold or preserve life,' again pointing to Christ: (DBW 3: 129, my italics) 'all orders of our fallen world are God's orders of *Erhaltung* that uphold and preserve us *for Christ*'.

Emil Brunner's The Divine Imperative

[23] Viktor Klemperer (*I shall bear witness*, 1999) identifies '*ewig*' [eternal] as a favourite and over-used word of the Nazi authorities in what he mockingly and aptly dubs LTI [*Lingua Tertii Imperii*].

Bonhoeffer's continuing engagement with this theme and Luther's 'Orders of Creation' as a part of his own work journey is furthered and deepened throughout the course of the year of 1932. In this chapter I will assert that Bonhoeffer's 1932 engagement with Brunner is more important than has been credited heretofore, and beyond that, that this engagement, combined with the effects of the Stählin interactions, and tracing the thread of his work journey, helps provide a further key to understanding more about what Bonhoeffer's 'turn' was in 1932. The chapter will also note that this helped spark the impetus for Bonhoeffer to begin the formulation of his own 'original' solution in the later doctrine of the mandates.

Brunner published the first edition of *Das Gebot und die Ordnungen* in March 1932. Something of the level of Bonhoeffer''s engagement with the text can be discerned under three main headings, or areas:

1. In analysing this text Bonhoeffer was presumably working from his 1932 edition (published by Mohr/Paul Siebeck). This has as subtitle: "*Entwurf einer protestantisch-theologischen Ethik*" (despite Bonhoeffer's student Hilde Pfeiffer noting it as *'Versuch*'). [24] Certainly the translator's preface states (Brunner, 13):

> Dr Brunner wishes me to say that although he has no desire to alter the *substance* of the book, had he written it in this year he would certainly have placed the *emphasis* rather differently, particularly in the Church's dealing with the problem of the state.

The choice of phraseology here reflects the reality that dealing with the state was a 'problem', which suddenly in the course of 1932 had grown from a partly conceptual and academic challenge to an overwhelming, life-changing and consuming concern. Bonhoeffer for his part appeared to see in 1932 the reality that the Church was existentially threatened. In the closing phrase of the penultimate chapter Brunner comments (one might add, with the wisdom of hindsight, from the safe distance of Switzerland) (554):

> Where the State exceeds its authority (as far as the church is concerned) all the church can do is offer spiritual resistance and, indirectly, to bring pressure to bear upon the State through public opinion: finally she may have to offer the protest of martyrdom.

Although such a statement may have seemed extreme when originally written in 1932, his insight here proved quickly (and until 1945) to be a consuming reality for so many believers. But even in 1932 it was not sufficient for Bonhoeffer for the most challenging call to be about 'spiritual resistance' and 'bringing pressure to bear upon the state through public opinion'. Bonhoeffer was

[24] He described (DBW 12: 173) the most valuable part of Brunner's work as the appendix, an 'analysis of the current situation'.

ahead of his generation in seeing this, but he was not alone: already in August 1932 from his station of exile in Turkey, Leon Trotsky was able to grasp the real situation, in all its seriousness, with complete accuracy, and (true to form) urging violent resistance. In *The German Puzzle* (1971, 305) he uses the analogy of a compound fracture, a rupture in the life of a nation cutting through all the tissues, to describe the current situation in Germany: 'Rarely has the interrelationship of classes and parties – of social anatomy and political physiology- been laid bare so starkly as in contemporary Germany'. He goes on (307):

> In National Socialism everything is as contradictory and chaotic as in a nightmare. Hitler's party calls itself socialist, yet it leads a terrorist struggle against all socialist organisations. It calls itself a workers' party, yet its ranks include all classes except the proletariat. It hurls lightning bolts at the heads of all the capitalists yet is supported by them.

(Trotsky's comment about the proletariat are perhaps among his least accurate and may represent wishful thinking on his part).

2. The second main area of Bonhoeffer's engagement with the text is discernible from an analysis of the DBW series. Apart from the student notes compiled from his lecture 'Review and Discussion of New Publications in Systematic Theology' in DBWE 12: 209-212, there are two further references to the fact that Bonhoeffer chose one or a number of sections from the publication for class discussion with his students. One of these is a footnote in DBWE 12 dated 29th October 1932, which cites a report of the Executive Committee meeting of the German section of the World Alliance, agenda point 2 (DBWE 12: 86): 'For the winter semester work with students, Dr. Bonhoeffer is again planning to hold discussions at the university on Brunner's ethics of the state'. The second is a letter from Siegmund-Schultze, dated 27th December 1932, which notes (DBWE 12: 86): 'I was very interested to hear you were dealing with Brunner's ethics of the state in your seminar'. These references show us that the text was being discussed with lively interest 'hot off the press'.

3. Finally, the list of titles of the new publications convey in themselves some of the urgency of being a Christian in society for people living in those hugely tumultuous days, surely that the one 'big issue' of 1932 was how the Christian lives and relates to 'the State': there are nine books on the list, each one dealing with this broad theme, and the 10th item is the Altona Confession, an early and costly protest against German Christian theology by a group of Protestant pastors in Altona, a suburb of Hamburg. By the time Bonhoeffer delivered his formal critique of Brunner's ethics, it was February 21st 1933, and he chose to include in the same lecture a brief reference to the then recently published Altona confession, which Bonhoeffer judged a needed step in addressing the crisis and disarray in public life. By then, with Hitler as Chancellor of Germany, the hitherto unimaginable, the previously unacceptably brutal, was actually taking place, and being

allowed to happen, at an extraordinary tempo, on an almost daily basis, but with the (equally) scarcely conceivable connection that this was all owned and initiated by the postholders occupying the offices and corridors of power of Germany's legitimate systems of governance. Quite how rapid and far-reaching this all was in its challenge to workplace orderliness is hard to capture and too easily overlooked, so I include here a passage from Viktor Klemperer's diary dated March 22nd 1933 (1999, 10):

> Fräulein Wiechmann visited us. She tells how in her school at Meissen all are bowing down to the swastika cross, are trembling for their jobs, watching and distrusting one another. A young man comes into the school on some errand or other. A class of fourteen-year-olds immediately begin singing the Horst Wessel song. Singing in the corridor is not allowed. Fräulein Wiechmann is on duty. 'You must forbid this bawling,' urge her colleagues.-'*You* do it then. If I forbid *this* bawling, it'll be said that I've taken action against a national song and I'll be out on my ear!' The girls go on bawling.

Consequently the 'lens' through which Bonhoeffer engaged with Brunner was very much that of relevance to, and with, the present hour, sharply focussed around the relationship of the Christian with the State, and with a growing appetite for resisting bad work. Conscious that it was a work of no small stature, Bonhoeffer would have been drawn in by Brunner's opening words (9):

> The question 'What ought we to do?' the great question of humanity, is the entrance to the Christian faith; none can evade it who wish to enter the sanctuary. But it is also the gate through which one passes out of the sanctuary again, back into life.

These words would continue to reverberate within his life throughout the course of 1932 and beyond. Yet it may appear at first glance that his 'take' from Brunner was minimal. Having (DBW 11: 89) 'seized' upon the book, his disappointment grew to outweigh his approval, at least initially, in many senses directly in relation to the immediacy and urgency of the gathering political and international storm (cf. DBW 11: 100). For Bonhoeffer the gap in Brunner's ethics was that he felt that Brunner fails to bring to centre stage the problem of the concrete command through the Church, whereas Bonhoeffer was of an almost entirely different mind, considering rather that for theological thinking this issue, with the church at the centre, is the (DBW 11: 100) 'foremost question and the point of departure for all that lies beyond'. What has been given far less attention is how a close reading of Brunner's work may have helped to inform and shape Bonhoeffer's thought about work and order as a whole, his thinking on discipleship and the mandates, and his conviction that his most significant theological contribution would in due course be his own work on the *Ethics*.

Brunner's sense of the prevailing mood and climate amongst people at the time, unsurprising in view of the unprecedented numbers of unemployed across Europe, is that it is one of despair. He articulates that sense of profound despair as having its roots in wrong values and an excessive materialism which have broken down social order, and now threaten 'to drain the last ounce of spiritual life out of humanity' (393). The breakdown of the economic order, and the effective exposure of the bankruptcy of its value system, is as Brunner sees it, both symptomatic of the crisis and an outworking of it. It is connected to a false anthropology, one which attempts to interpret the individual human being solely in the light of her own individual personality, and society as the coalescence of such individuals. It also relates *au fond* to a bad thing coming out of a good one, namely to the corruption of the Lutheran insight of the divine value of work and working within one's regular employment being distorted to become an inappropriately joyful and thoughtless affirmation of the world. Brunner sees this as having reached the point where (206):

> Finally this nemesis of world history reached even this idol, the same Capitalism which was only possible as a result of this secularisation of this idea of the Calling, has also destroyed it in its narrow bourgeois form, since it has dissolved the whole idea of callings and has led to an economic crisis which has destroyed the whole order of callings and has led to an economic crisis which has destroyed all joy in labour and all pride in one's calling.

Hence it is no small thing for the Christian to recapture a sense of calling to service and to make a useful contribution amidst this breakdown of intended goodness and order, a task which in Brunner's view is to a high degree made clear and facilitated through a lived-out understanding of Christian ethics. In the end this is possible only in and through Christ, whose coming into the world in the manner of God's choosing provides the definitive statement of God's intent and sovereign will, and the underwriting of the value and purposiveness of human existence. As human existence in Brunner's view (296) is 'existence-in-responsibility' it is a call to 'life in responsibility': 'Like the twin towers of a suspension bridge, responsibility is determined by the fact that the'I' is always determined by the 'Thou''.

In Brunner's thesis, the Christian is called upon to live this life responsibly in a spirit of critical co-operation, a 'watchful, determined attitude to all that is contrary to the will of God in human life' (338). In being watchful for God's wholly personal command and in order to discern what that will is, part of what has been forgotten, probably because the order of things tends to un-remind us of it, is that the economic system should never be regarded merely as an individual concern but also as the concern of the community as a whole: 'economic life must be based on a mutual relationship deriving from inequality' (404). People have forgotten their interdependence and need

reminding at times that a running away from other people or from the world is the opposite of the Christian calling, as, despite the fact that the actual economic world is the scene of a most brutal struggle for power, we are enjoined to work within the 'horrible machinery' of this profit system as it is the means through which God works, for better or for worse, within the world. There may never be a better system. Yet maintaining an appropriate balance to this critical co-operation requires no small skill as the economic order is always in flux. He writes (406):

> It is like the drunken peasant whom Luther describes who, when he is helped onto his horse on one side, promptly falls off the other: it oscillates between an individualism which destroys community and a collectivism which destroys freedom.

Brunner sees the way forward, the way of hope, as being a sacrificial pathway of service, a life wholly turned outwards in love and service of others, and hence sanctified, and wholly free from self absorption. Brunner sees humanity's self-absorption as a dream from which the starkness of the Cross of Christ is an awakening, a coming back to reality from the dream that we can achieve our goodness by ourselves, since before the Cross it becomes (embarrassingly) evident to us 'what we can do by means of our own righteousness' (75). Yet on and through the Cross, grace is at work, because human nature is shown to be not unfit for the realisation of the divine purpose, in a very indirect way, and is hence (241ff.):

> potentially able to do what is required by God, that is to love: both by showing the spirit of love and expressing it in effective action. But this potentiality only exists because He gives it to us (Barth).

For Brunner, a response to the Divine Command is no less than a call to Discipleship, to a life informed by a genuine spirituality that is fed by Scripture, meditation and a life of (311) 'prayer without ceasing', to a faith that means leaving oneself behind and finding fulfilment in (160) 'Christ being my righteousness'. This 'new person' exists and continues to exist, for Brunner, only in the obedience of faith. Brunner writes (161):

> This is his or her reality. Therefore behind the indicative 'Thou art the new creation' stands the imperative 'Be the new creation'. Thus the new humankind, like faith itself, is both God's gift and God's demand' (The German phrase, memorably, is *'Die Gabe be-inhaltet die Aufgabe'*).

This life of service can be rendered up with an appropriate sense of pride and *sach-gerecht* (doing one's job in the right way) righteousness while working in the world (which, if done in the right

spirit, is also working for the Kingdom of God), inspired by a right and clear understanding of God's Command as revealed within the 'orders' of society. He sees these orders as a divine creation and a divine gift. In a paragraph which, whilst perhaps having a hint of excessive other-worldliness, captures much of the central thesis of his extensive work, he writes (130ff.):

> Thus God's Command becomes known to us as the demand to give ourselves to the world for the sake of the gift of Christ, for God's sake, that we may give a glimpse of the aim which lies beyond this mortal life ... True sacrifice consists in serving the world within the various 'orders' of society, and moreover of wholly personal service to the individual.

Where the Church can help, in Brunner's view, in the economic struggle of the present day, is both by secretly and silently doing good works which have the outworking and effect of providing the inner soul of society, and by the more public act of fulfilling her task which is the (438) 'proclamation of the Gospel of the Creation, Healing and Redemption of the world through the God who is revealed in Christ'. In perhaps one of Brunner's least-cited but most significant phrases, in what is a genuine highlight in his contribution to theology, it is about the Church that he is writing, prophetically, when he notes (558): 'If a Church produces no living acts of charity for the Community as a whole, it is impossible to avoid suspecting that she is sick unto death'.

Hence it can clearly be seen that Brunner adumbrates a number of valuable ethical and theological themes which Bonhoeffer both identified with and with which he would continue to grapple over time. It is here in Brunner that we find the phrase 'ultimate and penultimate', which would have resonated with Bonhoeffer who had used it in Barcelona (DBW 10: 342). It is here that we find an encompassing definition of 'culture': (483) 'namely the sum total of all intelligent activity in thought and work'. I suggest that it may well be in connection with this that Bonhoeffer used work and culture in 1943 almost interchangeably as his fourth mandate. It is in Brunner that we find the beginnings of a call to action, and the articulation in part of Christian responsibility. Here we find work right at the centre of the theological puzzle. It is here that we find such a gathered sense of faith leading to a changed life, that we find the roots of further thinking on the crucial subject of discipleship, not least in a year that was to prove a turning point for Bonhoeffer, and at a time when his theological thought would move in the direction of discipleship. But for Bonhoeffer, some of the emphases were deeply inadequate. How is the believer, for example, to take seriously the exhortation to 'direct political action' (430) if at the same time one so exalts the current existing order that the Christian is able to go along with Brunner's view (which corresponds entirely in this case with Luther) that (224):

> The first (although not the highest) duty of every Christian is their 'official duty'. Humankind's first duty - even as a Christian - is the obedient acceptance and preservation of the present, existing order - however, imperfect, rough and loveless it may be.

As a continuation of this thought, Brunner endorses the use of physical force, even to the point of taking life, by the State, commenting (unhelpfully, in that era) (225) 'The rind of life must be hard if it is to protect the soft content of the life within'. At the time of writing, it had become a central issue that what was at the very heart of the state itself, representing the order that every German held so dear, had itself become the centre of an intractable problem, generating bad work that had to be resisted. By 1932 Karl Bonhoeffer, Dietrich's father, although himself not immune to the eugenics thinking of the day, had been fighting against the bad work represented by draft laws on compulsory sterilization of vulnerable adults for nine years (cf. Burleigh, 2000, 353). It was not meat enough for Bonhoeffer to read Brunner's hope-filled words (482):

> Therefore to live as a Christian in the State means above all to hope for the new world which lies beyond history, for that world where death and killing, force, co-ercion and even law will cease, where the only 'power' which will then be valued is the power of love.

So it was with some distinct feelings of reservation that Bonhoeffer wrote when he summarised Brunner for his students: 'First comprehensive ethical work of dialectical theology' (DBW 12: 173). However Bonhoeffer did note with approval that Brunner, unlike Barth, has a concern for apologetics, (which Brunner prefers to call eristics) and over the spring and early autumn of 1932, in the early part of which period he read Brunner's work, he went to the trouble of setting up face-to-face meetings with both theologians. It seemed to be the pattern with these meetings that it was as much to 'have a sense of the person' that Bonhoeffer sought out his theological contemporaries as it was to engage in detail with theological questions. His theological journey was enriched by relationship. His approach in relation to Brunner in particular would prove a good investment as he would return to engage closely with Brunner's work during the period later in 1940 (documented in Chapter 6) when he would write *Ethics*. Once again it is discernible that Bonhoeffer took what is good within a concept and made it his own.

The surviving lecture notes from Bonhoeffer's students testify amply to there having been a corresponding communication of vitality during this time. His audience would have started to become aware that this was a different sort of lecturer. Just the three opening sentences of *Creation and Fall* make this clear (DBW 3: 21):

> The Church of Christ bears witness to the end of all things. It lives from the end, it thinks from the end, it acts from the end, it proclaims its message from the end… [follows: a citation from Isaiah 43: 18-19]… The new is the real end of the old: the new, however, is Christ.

A comparison with what Bonhoeffer had been reading in Brunner over the spring and summer is apposite (Brunner, 127):

> We do not understand the 'end' God has in store unless we understand the beginning, that is, the Creation: but we also misunderstand the beginning, the Creation, if we know nothing of the end.

Certainly, Bonhoeffer had the academic and linguistic skill-set of the liberal Department of Academic Theology to which he belonged, but here was someone who communicated at the outset a vital interest (which would prove enduring) in the theological question related to Scripture 'What is the Bible saying *today*?'

Not only was Bonhoeffer starting to attract an audience because of his engagement with Scripture in the contemporary situation, but the Christocentric character of Bonhoeffer's theology was also already evident. In addition, even at the outset, Bonhoeffer's application of Isaiah demonstrated a fundamental difference between his position on the canonicity of the Old Testament (OT) vis-à-vis that of other respected contemporaries who in all seriousness were advocating (to much applause from adherents of the Nazi party) the abandonment of the OT by Christianity. Hence, in a further example of the extent to which his immediate context presented a challenge for Bonhoeffer at a number of levels, but also in a further example of where Bonhoeffer was of the same mind as Brunner (cf. for example Brunner, 54), Bonhoeffer's honoured teacher, Adolf von Harnack, had written in 1921 (DBW 3: 146ff.):

> The rejection of the Old Testament in the second century was a mistake which the great church rightly avoided ... but still to preserve it in Protestantism as a canonical document since the nineteenth century is the consequence of a religious and ecclesiastical crippling ... to clear the table here ... is the great deed that is being demanded today.

Although outright heresy was thus at the heart of the liberal academic establishment, there were other factors at play in the theological landscape of the late 1920s. Brunner, by contrast, was by these standards very much an ally.

Tracing the thread of Bonhoeffer's work journey – an informed continuation – Work in Creation and Fall

We now return to the thread of Bonhoeffer's work journey in 1932. My contention, as outlined earlier, is that he was, at this time as at others, asking himself the question 'What am I going to do with my work life, and to what extent will that be of use?' This section will now address the thinking about work raised in DBW 3 and assess how the issues captured in the table and sections above related together in Bonhoeffer's emerging theology of work.

Theologically some of the most profound insights Bonhoeffer ever made about work are found in *Creation and Fall*, and not the least of these come as he turned his thinking to the subject of rest in the lecture, delivered in Advent 1932, entitled 'Blessing and Completion'. Here what he suggested about rest is that it relates to, surrounds and blesses work in the original creation in a striking way. He wrote (DBW 3: 65):

> Rest in the Bible really means more than having a rest; it means rest after completing one's work; it means completion. It means the peace of God in which the world lies or rests (text uncertain)… Even in God's rest, God of necessity remains the Creator. 'My father is still working, and I am working'. (John 5, 17b) God remains the Creator but now as the one who has finished the work of creation. We understand God's rest only in the sense that it is at the same time rest for God's creation. God's rest is our rest (as God's freedom is our freedom, God's goodness our goodness). Therefore God hallows the day of rest also for Adam and for us, whose heart is restless until it finds rest in God's rest.

What the believer perceives clearly here is that rest in the original creation is not in any way utilitarian. The day of rest is not there to 'sleep away' (DBW 6: 66) and nor is it there as a time to re-charge the energy levels so that, refreshed, Adam may return to the serious (and more significant) business of work and life. Rather, in taking its lead from God's rest, which clearly hallows both rest and work at the same time, the very restlessness which drives so much of humankind's work is, in Augustine's words, called into question and put in its place. Bonhoeffer through this passage leads the believer to a place of reflection on the nature of work: it is a still, attentive and thoughtful place where work and rest are inextricably joined, re-affirmed, and re-valued. The reader is left to ponder deeply upon the notion that in His aseity God is able to hold both being at rest and 'always working' together.

Bonhoeffer addressed further the subject of what the fall means for work in some detail in a subsequent lecture in the same series, and the heart of this (what Bonhoeffer sees as the outcome of the fall) is as follows: the work that human beings do on the ground that is cursed comes to express fallen humankind's state of dividedness from nature: that is, work, too, falls under the

curse. The thinking here is that everything in all creation is, by the fall, estranged from God, a notion which Bonhoeffer captured by the stark German word '*Entzweiung*' , which, in addition to conveying a sense of estrangement also carries the notion of 'ripping asunder'. (This is an important and powerful concept to note and absorb so I shall return to this below). Bonhoeffer had been reflecting throughout the year on the implications, or 'inversions' of work becoming a curse : in the earliest part of 1932, in his catechism for confirmands, he alluded to the fact that as work has become a curse, it is a place where (DBW 11: 231) 'our power over things is turned upside down to become the power of things over us'. In this situation Bonhoeffer's understanding in 1932 was that despite the catastrophe of the fall, it is in work that is signalled to humankind a glimmer of mercy and hope. This lies in the fact that within the compass of God's curse, just because it is God's curse (which makes it proleptically redemptive, and the world not wholly God-forsaken) humankind is still allowed to live alongside nature, from which it was taken, and to which it belongs 'as a sibling' (DBW 3: 26). There is thus in this thinking also a significant closeness and connectedness to the earth to humankind's post-fall work, and Bonhoeffer drew this too into this the high point of his short-lived theology of the 'orders of preservation'. In this section this is represented by the word '*erhalten*', here translated as 'upholds' (DBW 3:26):

> So the fruit of the field becomes both the bread that we eat with tears and yet at the same time the [*Gnadebrot des Erhalters*] the bread of grace of the one who upholds, who allows human beings to go on being on the accursed ground and remain true to their mother, the earth, even though she stands under God's curse. Human beings at work live between curse and promise, between *tob* and *ra*, pleasure and pain, but they live before God the Creator.

In this light, work since the fall, despite the fact that it is described as toil, (the German here, *Mühsal der Arbeit*, is evocative language) is deeply a means of grace, as the very point of preservation is as 'preservation unto something' (in Adam's case, preservation unto death) i.e. that it is *temporary*: as an expression and means of grace.

I now return to the subject of tracing the thread of what I am calling the work journey for Bonhoeffer as captured in the above table (pp. 91-92). *Creation and Fall* resonates with the power of the concept of '*Entzweiung*' which is being grappled with. Another similar and evocative word which echoes through the pages of the book is '*Zweispalt,*' meaning 'split'. I alluded above to this being a (more than) thematic word in 1932 for Bonhoeffer, and mentioned that in 1932 as he engaged with a theology of work it 'got personal' for him, after, in particular, his interactions with Stählin, and his reading of Brunner. My contention is that by understanding how Bonhoeffer related to work we may also better grasp the significance and the possible timing of his 'turn' in 1932. (The German word is '*Zäsur*', which indicates a change of slightly greater magnitude than

the English conveys). As Bonhoeffer asked himself (as mentioned above) the question (after, and still in the context of, his indecision about Elizabeth Zinn) 'What am I to do with my work life, and of what usefulness is that?' he was at a deeper level working on a split within himself which relates to work. The table helps us clearly to follow the thread of this work journey. He was low throughout April, despite meeting Barth, and deeply troubled by his interactions with Stählin. An absolute low point was reached in his sermon on 2 Chronicles 20: 12, where he engaged ever more profoundly with the subject of work (DBW 11: 419ff.):

> What does 'Love your neighbour' mean? What does it mean for the politician, who decides between war and peace? What does it mean in raising children? In marriage? For a businessman? What should he do next and how does he show love to his neighbour? As he grows his business, by giving work to his people and taking it away from a hundred others? By paying a hundred people well and 500 people subsistence wages? Indeed, the words love your neighbour have no one-size-and-fits-all meaning, do not say to us unequivocally 'you should do this!' Rather the reverse - as we place ourselves under this command the more do we recognise the hiddenness of the divine command before us, the more so we sink into our cluelessness, into our not-knowingness. [*Ratlosigkeit and Nichtwissen*] ... It is as though we were in a beautiful landscape with a stunning view and then suddenly a cold fog descended, surrounding us completely, so we couldn't see to put one foot in front of another, and making us freezing cold. It's as though the sun had been darkened over for us and we were left standing alone in the dark and the cold … But now we are going home to our work: manual workers, civil servants, buyers, [*Kaufleute*] students, priests: to our work where we don't know what we should do.

My contention is that it is to this engulfing sense of work despair that he was alluding when he wrote about what he was doing in this sermon to E. Sutz on May 17th, stating (DBW 11: 89, my translation):

> For me the problem is becoming more and more acute and ever more unbearable. I recently preached on 2 Chronicles 20, 12 (b). I really got all my despair off my chest [*abgeladen*]. But for all that I didn't really advance the cause much. So Barth himself - that's now clear to me - is not with me on this one, but he did recently give me a talking to on the subject, whether I still thought the same way, and he said clearly enough to me that for him this subject spooks him [*unheimlich*] more and more.

This letter shows us that the April meeting between Barth and Bonhoeffer had its differences. Quite what was the subject about which Barth was 'spooked' and about which they disagreed is a

matter of conjecture, although it is likely to have been in the area of the 'ethical problem' of the relationship between the Christian and the state, and accordingly would have played into the deeper issue at stake for Bonhoeffer, namely what work role he was to play in that vital arena. But the content is a secondary issue to the real matter in hand, which is Bonhoeffer's work journey and the fact that he reached such a low point in the May of 1932. Even the initial burst of enthusiasm for Brunner's book was offset, as we have seen, by other concerns.

Responsible Theological work – articulating a life call

What seems to mark a change, though, is Bonhoeffer's welcome address to the international ecumenical youth conference on peace at *Ciernohorské Kúpele* in July 1932. He left this event early, in order to go and vote against the Nazi party. It is an event in which – in addition to mentioning the Sermon on the Mount, which is almost the first sign of his next big project - he is recorded as using phrases such as *Hitlerpartei* and *anti-Hitler* for the first time. There is one part of this address where the words he used about work are deeply significant (DBW 11: 349, trans. altered):

> Nazism is invading the churches as well: the job of responsible theological work, supported by the ecumenical world, is to strengthen and support that proportion of Germans and Christians in Germany who are fighting against Hitler.

My sense of this key phrase is that it is not just the job of other people Bonhoeffer was writing about but that it is *his* job, *his* role, *his* responsibility and *his* calling which he was articulating here in July 1932, and that, because of that articulation, much of the despair and frustration expressed in the foregoing months was set into context and began to lift. There would still be all of these things in deep measure in the months to come, not least in relation to the Church, which will be addressed in the next chapter. But this moment seems to me to be one of deep clarity, and coming as it does in the context of all that has been described, it is when we understand it, as Bonhoeffer did, in relation to work (and even calling) that its true significance may be grasped. It would prove to be the work and work responsibility that he undertook most unswervingly, to which he gave his life, and which took his life from him. It is significant in this respect that the editors of the DBW series, writing in the *Nachwort* to DBW 5, attribute to this very same lecture a theological shift for Bonhoeffer, a change which lasts right through to the prison theology: 'No longer does a gap in the natural autonomy of the world need to be maintained for God' (DBW 5: 162): the sense that religious individualism is overcome and becomes instead a participation in God's being-for-us in revelation, in Christ and in Christ's church's being-for-the-world. Bonhoeffer wrote: 'The whole world is its territory' (DBW 11: 39). It makes sense that these two insights, the breakthrough into worldliness and the clarion call to responsible work, are held together.

The table above, at the start of the chapter, demonstrates in diagrammatic form that in the light of the foregoing, from July 1932 onwards, Bonhoeffer had the beginnings of greater clarity in relation both to work and to his own work. There is one aspect of this assertion which is possibly at variance with Bethge's discernment of Bonhoeffer's journey throughout the course of 1932, which needs to be mentioned here: Bethge's summary is that in the second half of 1932, Bonhoeffer's writing of his literary draft on '*Beruf*' comes out of a negative place, and second, that his draft on his (Bethge, 206) 'longing for death' is the same. My view is that this needs to be an open question and considered in the light of what has been discussed here. In fact, according to the editors of DBW 11, the dating of the draft on death (DBW 11: 373) is very uncertain. Also Bonhoeffer, as we saw in Chapter 3, was no stranger to confronting his own mortality. In my own understanding of Bonhoeffer's journey, seen here in relation to work, what came next, in the October of 1932, were (for him) two 'testings out' of this theory (that his work call and his sense of self in relation to work was genuinely starting to become clearer). First, he volunteered for the equivalent of a vocational roadworthiness test in a (particularly for him) very challenging, but rewarding, context (given all that has been said about the significance of work in his family): the baptism in his parents' house of his nephew, the son of his highly successful (nuclear physicist) elder brother. My suggestion, based on the record of the transactions which took place here, is that for Bonhoeffer, who invested serious theological thought into the event in his work and family capacity, overall it turned out to be a success and that what Bonhoeffer included about work (DBW 11:464) 'love the day and its work', proves to be an indication, read in the light of Bonhoeffer's work journey, of an upward movement on this pathway for Bonhoeffer himself. Second, during October, he went through the helpful process of writing up a 'classroom moment' when he first felt the call to study theology. Bethge alludes to this (2000, 206) as a 'self-tormented' piece but my view is that a description of 'tough' may have been more apposite. This well-known passage was cited above in Chapter 3. The reader notes this overall in the setting I have outlined, not least in that work, as already mentioned, has to journey through the place of despair, as a seminal experience for Bonhoeffer. Then, in the November, came the *Creation and Fall* lectures, whose gripping effect upon the listeners is well documented, and it seems inconceivable that the enjoyment was not reciprocal. Then in the seminar on December 7th 1932, the student Hilda Pfeiffer copied down the words (DBWE 3: 155):

> Self-knowledge in Augustine … For Augustine the Christian the split (dividing human beings into will and flesh) has vanished; he sees himself as a creature who is one and undivided.

The editors of the DBWE series have rightly included this very important note more from the perspective of the foundational importance of Augustine for Bonhoeffer. My point is that it is

when the vocational thread and the significance of work for Bonhoeffer is traced, as here, that the importance of this remark is seen for what it most fully represents. In this work of lecturing in this way, and making Scripture come alive for his students as was readily happening, and in beginning to put the theological framework into place for the resisting of bad work, Bonhoeffer was experiencing a coming-together of his work life such as he had hardly yet experienced, and this moment here represented another highly positive step in this vocational respect, a continuous upward thread which we have traced from the moment he first articulated his work calling in Czechoslovakia that July: *the job of responsible theological work, supported by the ecumenical world is to strengthen and support that proportion of Germans and Christians in Germany who are fighting against Hitler* (my italics). The central importance of the Augustine self-knowledge passage is that this (work) integration is something which Bonhoeffer had always sought, and my contention is that for Bonhoeffer it plays into the theological discussion of the healing of the *Entzweiung* between God and humankind, the healing of that tearing asunder whose impact was the making of work into a curse, which the fall represents. But it also speaks at the level of the divided self: the human being who wants to do good, yet in whom still, the bad will flourish, an enduring question of classical antiquity. I suggested above that as Bonhoeffer asked himself the question 'What am I to do with my work life, and of what usefulness is that?', he was at a deeper level working on a split within himself which relates to work, and it would seem reasonable to suggest here is that in this instance that split is, for the present, made whole. A further indication that this may have been true comes in the fact that it was in that same month, December 1932, that Bonhoeffer, in a lecture for the Student Christian Movement entitled 'Christ and Peace', enumerates a significant proportion of the key themes of what would become *Nachfolge*. It is here that 'cheap grace' is first mentioned, that Bonhoeffer makes the deep and established link between faith and obedience, where he indicates the priority of the Sermon on the Mount, and mentions discipleship (DBW 17: 117):

> As long as the world abandons God, there will be wars. Christ is much more concerned that we love God, that we come into a discipleship relationship with Jesus into which we are called through the promise of the Beatitudes, in which way we become ambassadors for peace.

The fact that these themes begin to be articulated here in the context of developing an understanding of work as responsibility is not coincidental. Rather, it is a further expression of the importance of work as a motif for Bonhoeffer and points the way forward to what would become his true calling, in living a life of integrity that embodied good work.

Reflection

Given all that has been mentioned above, when Bonhoeffer discerned quickly in 1933, together, and possibly in conjunction, with, Karl Barth, that even this new term (orders of preservation) could also be dangerously mis-used, he decided no longer to make use of it. Instead he kept in reserve what was of help within the concept until it could be re-worked. What had started to emerge in the meantime was the extent to which theology would be called to step up to the mark in making a helpful contribution to German society and would not only fail, but actively contribute to its problems. Although this is a diachronic study, it is worth looking just a little further ahead at this stage to furnish some examples of what is meant. One example (DBWE 3: 12) is that of the distinguished Lutheran theologian Paul Althaus. It was to Althaus that Bonhoeffer was personally and professionally indebted as he had sought and obtained from Althaus the needed commendation from an expert source of the publication-worthiness of *Act and Being* to the publishing house *Gütersloh*. Althaus published a pamphlet called *Theologie der Ordnungen* (Theology of the Orders, *Gütersloh* 1934) in which the German race, nation or *Volk* was understood as part of God's created order and law, a publication representing a fuller version of thinking he had been working on and publishing since 1927. This was a full theological affirmation of the Nazi party race ideology captured in their slogan *Blut und Boden* [Blood and Soil], and a devastating indictement on a church that was then failing adequately to address theological thinking about order. It was an issue of which the seriousness could hardly be overstated: what had previously been mere misrepresentation was mild, compared with the horror of what was to come. Perhaps not the least example of this came when subsequent to the *Krystallnacht* pogrom, later in 1938, a Lutheran bishop would, most supportively for the Nazi party, retrieve the most offensive words written by Luther about Jews and make a specific application of them to the current situation, endorsing the incidences of appalling anti-semitic behaviour as a prophetic fulfilment of Luther's wishes. It was possibly an all time low point reached by a Lutheran Bishop, one which would offer a theological endorsement to, and a hierarchical sanctioning of, much of the brutality towards Jews already evidenced. That endorsement would work supportively towards collaboration in the project of the eradication of Jews by murder which the regime and its subjects would be embarking upon in only three years' time. Recent literature has shown how necessary for the implementation of these crimes was the tacit co-operation and collusion of the German nation as a whole, and from this perspective the understanding of the deficiency of much of the Church leadership is all the more serious. So at one level this study of work and Bonhoeffer's work journey has led naturally to the question: 'Where was the Church on all this?' although a response to this question is not possible within the scope of this thesis.

With this in view, what is significant, and less well known, is that the racial analysis of the German nation as a whole, because at the time it appeared, like a wolf in sheep's clothing, to be an innocuous request, was almost wholly facilitated through the willing participation and co-operation

of the established Church, in the guise of 'everyday work'. State enquiries to a national church for access to historical records would on the face of it seem a reasonable requirement. Yet the malevolence behind the requests was to render the work itself bad, a fact that was unclear to almost all participants save the smallest few. The evidence for this comes in *Bonhoeffer for a New Day* (ed. De Gruchy, 1977, 252ff.) where the authors make the point that by means of anti-semitic legislation, the churches were drawn into complicity with the state, because the state only had access to data covering two generations. All citizens who were asked to prove 'Aryan ancestry had no alternative other than to ask the parish pastor to provide a 'Proof of Aryan Ancestry' [*Ariernachweis*] on the basis of the church registers. In a context where daily requests saying 'Give me my grandmother's certificate of baptism' were being received, former Bonhoeffer student Joachim Kanitz commented in1983 'What a signal it would have been if the German Pastors had said 'We will not provide these certificates'(De Gruchy, 253). The authors comment 'What (Kanitz) still fails to see, 50 years on is that it would not have been possible to distinguish on a national scale between Aryan and non-Aryan!' My own observation is that without this co-operation, or an analogous one, and without this corruption of work itself, the entire holocaust could not have happened. The work understanding of an entire class of society, namely the German clergy of the time, was flawed. Bonhoeffer, however, was an exception. In 1933, with Hildebrand, he (De Gruchy, 252ff.) 'introduced ideas about a ministers' strike and said for example that the pastors should go on strike if they were asked to write out these Aryan certificates', just as he and Hildebrand had called for a clergy boycott against conducting funeral services as long as the drastic interim government by state commissars lasted (Bethge, 2000, 292). His understanding of work was that this was bad work that should be resisted. The extrapolation of this is that his theological thinking and intuition had led him to a place where, had this one counsel of his (the refusal to write out ancestral documentation) been heeded, millions of deaths might have been avoided. It is not entirely satisfactory to suggest that the German Government would have got hold of the information via another means because in fact there were no other means. Of course, resistance would have been costly, but if resistance had been at the level which Bonhoeffer called for (he called for the entire class of clergy to go on strike) it would have taken a revolution of another entire class of society (Church parishioners) against clergy for the relevant racial ancestry information to have been traceable. Barnett agrees with this point and cites Ernst Wilm's parish in Mennighüffen as an example of the extraordinary workload which compliance placed on parishes throughout Germany (1992, 37-38):

> The grotesque thing was that we had to devote almost half of our working time, until we hired a secretary, for people who wanted to trace their "Aryan" ancestors in the church books. They came constantly to the parsonage and asked for the birth certificates of their grandparents … (Barnett continues)… In 1933, the churches' refusal to comply with the

> state demand for proof of 'Aryan ancestry' would have been an act of civil resistance that would have publicly questioned the legitimacy of the Nazi state itself. Not surprisingly, most church pastors did not even think of any such act, let alone its implications.

Thus a revolt of this magnitude is scarcely conceivable given the circumstances of the time, not least because, as alluded to above, it would have been counter-intuitive for working clergy to have embarked upon such a path of resistance when the Hitler government was wildly popular and in everyday life all around them they could observe evidence of workers returning to work. Yet, the entire architecture of the racist Nazi ideology could have been disrupted if Bonhoeffer and Hildebrand had been heeded. Perhaps it would be better said the other way around, that the entire architecture simply could never have been put into place if this had been the case. In this sobering context it is worth noting that the lessons Bonhoeffer learned through this time were undoubtedly at the heart of the encouragement towards resistance that he was able to convey to leaders of the Norwegian church during his *Abwehr* visit in 1942. Perhaps not unsurprisingly, in 1933, the novel idea did not occur to Bonhoeffer that all professions could work together (as would happen later in 1941 in Norway) in striking against the regime, as work was the very thing that the Nazi party could rightly claim to have restored to the German worker in no small measure.

In terms of this thesis, Bonhoeffer's understanding of the work responsibility of German clergy at the time was not only good intuition, it was prophetic and accurate in its call for resistance. He called for this bad work to be resisted. Yet for all that, it was not to be. But by 1933 the surrounding tensions had become much higher. There is a 1930 letter to Gregor Strasser, then a leading light of high standing in the Nazi party, from the 34-year-old SA standard leader Willi Veller, which Joachim Fest cites in his biography on Hitler (1974, 295):

> In my work for the NSDAP I have faced a court martial more than thirty times and have been convicted eight times of assault and battery, resistance to a Police officer, and other such misdemeanours that are natural for a Nazi. To this day I am still paying instalments on my fines, and in addition have other trials coming up. Furthermore, I have been more or less severely wounded at least twenty times. I have knife scars on the back of my head, on my left shoulder, on my lower lip, on my right cheek, on the left side of my upper lip, and on my right arm. Furthermore, I have never yet claimed or received a penny of party money, but have sacrificed my time to our movement at the expense of the good business I inherited from my father. Today I am facing financial ruin.

There is a double point made by this illustration. The first is to illustrate the financial consequences of indulging in devotion to the Nazi cause, and the way in which that was parasitical on good

business work over many preceding years. The second is less to note that the adherents of Nazism were fanatical, and so slavishly devoted to the party cause that they were prepared to make almost any sacrifice for it, but more to underline the fact that the order of the day in devotion to this cause represented adopting brutality as a way of doings things, in other words endorsing thoroughgoing violent behaviour as an accepted way of life. In this respect brutality towards anyone it considered an opponent was seen as good work by the party, and this illusion, whilst it persisted for a surprisingly long time, proved in the end so pernicious that its exposure would not be survivable. For the discerning observer, however, the situation, early in 1933, was already clear. In *The Churches and the Third Reich* Klaus Scholder reports (1977, 253):

> From the first day of its existence the Third Reich was a terrorist system. During the time of struggle Hitler had so obviously relied on the power of violence and at the same time had so openly threatened his opponents with extermination - above all the Jews and the Marxists - that after 30 January this pre-history alone was enough to spread a climate of fear and terror among many of those involved.

It was akin at one very serious level to a gigantic lie: the lie that work being conducted in the manner described by the SA standard leader Willi Veller, characterised and energised by brutality, was good work. It was a lie which had tremendous currency amongst the churches, with the literal extermination of the orthodox church in Russia right before their eyes, as this kind of violence could easily be positioned as the only means of a 'deliverance from communism'. This lie, furthermore, was 'sold' so effectively that it was accepted by the vast majority of the population as truth. It was even (initially) wrapped in religious packaging, which made its appeal the more seductive and artful. Scholder cites the reflections of Leonhard Ragez, a (prophetic) Swiss observer of the March 21st Potsdam celebrations of 1933 (Scholder, 1977, 256):

> all this had been a lie - the apex of lies, <u>the lie</u> - the religious display of the whole demonic swindle, the ringing of bells and organ playing … everything to the tune of 'God is with us' - this last a grave blasphemy. For quite apart from all the lies, amidst all this … singing and praying ... resound the screams of the sons and daughters of Germany tortured in the barracks of this 'liberator and restorer' of Germany. This edifice of illusion and deceit, crowned by this religious deceit, will collapse horribly, as a symbol of the downfall of all the forces that came together in it.

It is particularly poignant that an element of the deceit was religious, or at least used symbols and connections borrowed from a faith context. With his unswerving eye for accuracy, Viktor Klemperer highlights this additional layer of deception by the use of the word 'consecrate' when

he writes on April 10th 1933: 'Hitler consecrates new flags by touching them with the 'blood flags' of 1923. Gunfire every time the flags touch' (1999, 41). Certainly Hitler could, on occasion, pull off a convincing act of sounding impressively like a Bishop in invoking the blessing of the Almighty on his ambitions. But what really characterised Hitler, and hence came to lie at the heart of all the activity of his inmost circles, and became simply the *modus operandi* of much of Germany itself during his years in power, was none other than brutality itself. Perhaps the motif of brutality defines this period like no other. If it was not already entirely clear to all around him that this was the case from the earliest days, he would later in the summer of 1938 spell it out in the context of a conversation about the tactics of military intelligence. Bassett, writing in *Hitler's Spy Chief*, reports a discussion in the context of Hitler's warm approval of a Soviet officer bloodbath where, through a clever double agent manoeuvre linked with Heydrich, Stalin had been at least partially encouraged and, to an unknowable extent, manipulated into the execution of 35, 000 Soviet officers. He records that Hitler stated (2005, 143):

> I too would not recoil from destroying 10,000 officers if they opposed themselves to my will. What is that in a nation of 80 million? I do not want men of intelligence. I want men of brutality.

Already by 1933 the true and brutal nature of what lay at the heart of the 3rd Reich was clear to Viktor Klemperer. He did not recognise it as German, nor did he really understand it, but he was able to see it and name it for what it was. On April 3rd 1933 he wrote in his diary (1999, 13): 'Everything un-German, brutality, injustice, hypocrisy, mass suggestion to the point of intoxication, all of it flourishes here'.

Klemperer's choice of the word *brutality* here is significant, and it is relevant to this thesis as a whole that the flourishing he describes both encompassed and had such prominence in the workplace. It was in their workplaces that Jews were boycotted on April 1st, 1933. It was work which was used by the regime as a weapon of attack against the Jews. Even the unknown editor who inserted (with supportive intent) a positive statement from 1523 by Luther about good mutually respectful relationships between Christians and Jews as a preface into Bonhoeffer's June 1933 essay 'The Church and the Jewish question' chooses a passage making explicit reference to the centrality of the workplace (DBWE 12: 362). Ten days after the boycott of Jewish premises Klemperer reports how the German workplace itself has become infected with the allure and tincture of Nazism, capturing a vivid picture in his entry of April 10th (1999, 15):

> How fanatical the male and female nurses are. They sit around the loudspeaker. When the Horst Wessel song is sung (every evening and at other times too) they stand up and raise their arms in the Nazi greeting.

It would only be a short journey for the infection of ideas in the workplace (not unrelated to the point about intoxication above) to transform itself into an acceptance, and adoption, of brutality. It is surely significant in this respect that Bonhoeffer himself reached a low point when he opted to decline to take the funeral of a Jewish relative in April 1933 (Bethge, 275) on the advice of his superintendent. Accordingly it is a subject of less wonder that both Bonhoeffer's calls to fellow pastors were ignored at that time in 1933 when he himself was unable to resist the directive of his own immediate superior. In a sense the key to understanding the phrase is in the phrase 'the pastors' (cf. p. 113). Bonhoeffer's call did not say 'we' and was hardly in a position to suggest 'everyone'. But the phrase is still revealing inasmuch as it shows that for all his academic excellence, it was for Bonhoeffer still 'advice for others' and not grounded in his own integrated discipleship as yet, and not least how he had not yet worked out what order would look like when lines and channels of authority would, in a most un-German-like fashion, have to be disobeyed. Thus the daily requests to clergy for Baptism Certificates were complied with, the certificates were issued, and the (at that time unimaginable) consequences flowed tragically onwards. In this light, Bonhoeffer's understanding of what work for the Christian disciple in Nazi Germany entailed had from that stage onwards to face a new question: how does the worker work in harmony with such a Church (and articulate a theology of resistance) when their voice is raised in protest against bad work but is then drowned out and ignored? Hence the question for his theology of work had to move on from being 'How does one formulate an understanding of life and work which could be communicated to others in order that they might receive, be blessed and obey' to 'what does it mean for theology (and those who express it) when its insights are disregarded,' and 'How shall I live as a disciple for today, when I see I now have to 'bite the hand that feeds me, and disobey my direct superior?' The German word for this un-German behaviour is *Nestbeschmutzer* [soiler of one's own nest]. It is a meaningful phrase as it encapsulates something of the sense of revulsion inherent in this 'going against the grain'. At one level this difficulty represents a watershed, a 'new irrelevance' for theology (as Bonhoeffer had hitherto perceived it). Up until this point, it had seemed for Bonhoeffer that theology *per se* really did have something to offer in terms of direction and hope. He had, indeed, begun ruminating as to its true value in 1931. Yet for all the insights of theology, when the young Bonhoeffer called for a strike in 1933, nothing changed, even in the hearts and minds of the most committed, the most insightful, when it really mattered. Remembering the point of Chapter 1 and the significance of family role models for Bonhoeffer, it becomes possible to say that what really counted was action, such as that which (of all people) his grandmother undertook on April 1st, 1933, refusing to comply with the government's 'Jewish

boycott'. The link between Bonhoeffer's biography and his theology is thus profound, and continues to be so.

In July 1933, in what was to prove a deeply symbolic encounter, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Gerard Jakobi drove (it was his father's car, with driver) to the Gestapo headquarters on Prinz Albrechtstrasse, a place of work subsequently infamous for its abusive methods (Bethge, 295). (Jakobi was also Elizabeth Zinn's training incumbent in her curacy at the time, which may have played a role in influencing Bonhoeffer's choice of collaborative partner in the episode). On arrival Bonhoeffer demanded to speak in person with the head of the Gestapo Rudolph Diehls, and upon gaining an audience Bonhoeffer challenged him to return pamphlets relating to the forthcoming Church elections which the Gestapo had confiscated. He did in fact succeed in obtaining the restitution of a limited supply of the pamphlets in question and subsequently played down the fact that 'KZ' (Konzentrationslager or Concentration Camp) did come up in the conversation'. It was a symbolic encounter in that it represented a genuinely free act and was one that did not result in Jakobi's or Bonhoeffer's immediate arrest and incarceration, but more than this, it represented an appeal to Diehls' better nature, the type of appeal which would very soon in the coming period (Diehls' own duration in his role was to prove short-lived) be destined to fall on deaf ears. Essentially his opponent Bonhoeffer was asking him to rein in his tactics, and Diehls chose to allow a certain compromise. But the gesture of the visit also gives a picture of what it meant for Bonhoeffer to act decisively out of Christian conviction. In Bonhoeffer's evolving theology of work, this action represented his best current thinking from that time, particularly in relation to the theme of responsibility. It demonstrates at the same time how Bonhoeffer felt the Church (given that he started a new pattern of regular church attendance in 1933) should respond to a Government in power acting inappropriately. Bonhoeffer was determined to break the church out of its default mode of compromise with, and accommodation to, political powers for the sake of its own survival as church. It modelled how disagreement should be done in the workplace: face to face, with integrity and honour. In a sense the illustrative snapshot provided by this visit captures in poignant fashion a sense of how at a societal level total brutality had not yet in the summer of 1933 entirely taken hold. It also spoke eloquently at the level of good work confronting brutality, which is an enduring puzzle for the Christian church, and it is the playing out of this theme which would swiftly draw Bonhoeffer into hand-to-hand conflict with the Nazi regime. But the dominant question for Bonhoeffer in relation to work at that time was whether his workplace at that moment was best within Germany or not, and over the course of that summer he became sure that accepting a role in London was the right thing for his working life. Just as they had done over the subject of the Baptism certificates, with the adoption of the Aryan clause, Bonhoeffer and Hildebrandt had made on September 6th, an impassioned plea, again without success, for widespread resignations from office (Bethge, 307). Clearly, working for a Reich church that had no integrity was out of the

question, and the Confessing church was only just about to start the process of coming into existence. So Bonhoeffer, making it clear to the authorities that he would not be an ambassador for the Reich church, chose to move to London. In the sense that as he walked away somewhat chastened and disappointed by the apparent outcomes of the clash and conflict of these days to his (related) decision to move on to work in England, the story of his theology was also in transition at the same time. It is fair to observe that despite all the strands of continuity in the wider sweep of his theological thought over his lifetime, there are moments of significant transition such as this instance, where life experience and theological thought impact upon one another and relate deeply together. A further example of this is that from near the end of 1933 for a period of around two years Bonhoeffer entered a phase of silence in his relationship with Karl Barth, a relationship that had up to that point been life-giving and hope-filled in terms of Bonhoeffer's personal life and his relationship with theology and the Church. The experience of such humbling and disregarding as was experienced by Bonhoeffer in this and other similar instances throughout the course of 1933 surely leads the believer to the place akin to despair. Such a place is one where false hope is lost, before, by God's grace, re-emerging the other side to the dawn of a new reality, and a further deepened commitment to the resisting of bad work, and to the working out of a new understanding of what order needed to look like. In Bonhoeffer's case, this proved to be costly, but it became the path he would choose.

This chapter has thus introduced the importance of 'order' in society, and traced something of the story of how the concept came to be abused in Germany. It has traced how in 1932 Bonhoeffer's thinking on work was articulated and how it developed. It has noted the profound influence of Bonhoeffer's interactions with Stählin and has suggested an alternative to the prevailing understanding of the change that came over Bonhoeffer sometime in 1932 by arguing that the change may well have had its roots more profoundly in the ordination service of November 1931 than has hitherto been understood. It has also suggested that it may have been around the time of July in Czechoslovakia in the significant year 1932, when his life took a 'turn', and that it is in Bonhoeffer's articulation of the job of responsible theological work and voicing the call to his own life's work that the 'turn' may have been largely located. The chapter has argued that this, combined with the effect of Bonhoeffer's interaction with the Theses of Stählin, illustrates the development of a process and marks a significant new stage in his commitment to resistance. Further, it has been suggested that this interaction is likely to have provided the impetus for the choice of subject matter for the seminal series of lectures on Genesis during the autumn of 1932. The chapter has also argued that in addition, Bonhoeffer was somewhat more influenced by Brunner in 1932 than has been credited heretofore, and that the combination of all these factors was contributory in great measure both to Bonhoeffer's own work journey and to the project of resistance to bad work. The chapter has drawn particular attention to the less well known and

disturbing fact that it was the work of the clergy in Germany which provided the practical architecture for the Nazi Government's implementation of their racist ideological policies and that in this respect Bonhoeffer said the clergy should go on strike. The chapter has closed by highlighting the importance for Bonhoeffer of being ignored when he took this stand, sparking in its turn the need for a fundamental re-appraisal of what form his life's work should take, one which would need to take place as he reflected both on his own inadequacies in collusion with anti-Jewish behaviour and also on what, for the next phase of his work journey, a life of 'responsible work' would really look like. The next chapter examines how that would be lived out as resistance in the work of opposing the National Socialist regime.

Chapter 6: *Unser Kampf*

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to argue that Bonhoeffer from 1932 onwards saw that *his life's work was to oppose the National Socialist regime* and that a primary contribution he made in the period 1934-1938 was the formation of numerous confessing church ordinands, a project which culminated in his published work *Nachfolge*. The theme of the centrality of work is strengthened in this period because this publication represented what Bonhoeffer saw as his own life's work in the years preceding its appearance and in it he urges the believer to stand up and be counted, not least through bringing active faith considerations into the workplace. In this light, there is a further tracing of the thread of the increasingly close affinity Bonhoeffer saw between work and responsibility. Given that this period proved to be one where life and work were linked for Bonhoeffer in an unprecedented way, a secondary motif also emerges and accordingly I will also argue that Bonhoeffer at this stage saw life and work as a potentially unified whole (as did the German government of the time) with the proviso that Bonhoeffer saw that life should be lived in a completely different way from that advocated by the Nazi regime.

The context of *Gleichschaltung*[25]

The overarching whole which the National Socialist government desired for life in Germany was one of a unified, hard-working, high-achieving and proud Germany. It was also to be a country where by default no other political parties were tolerated, where there was no such thing as freedom of speech, where people regarded as being racially inferior were disposed of, where the Church was expected to be subservient to the regime, and where those with physical deformities or imperfections were quietly killed. In this respect things were very bad when a pastor sympathetic to the party was found, as this story exemplifies (Scholder, 1977, 144):

> Thus the NS *Preussiche Zeitung* reported a 'brown shirt wedding' which took place in the *Schlosskirche* in Konigsberg at the start of July 1931. *Gaukommissar* Hermann Schoepe received the church's blessing for his marital union with one party member Elfriede Siebert. At the door of the *Schlosskirche*, party members and friends greeted the young couple with a vigorous Hitler salute. The participants in the ceremony all took their places before the altar, all of them champions for Hitler's idea - the men in uniform. Pastor Trepte based the ceremony on the biblical passage … 'Be faithful to death and I will give you the crown of life' … in this way he could take as his starting point the loyalty to Hitler's idea which party member Schoepe had demonstrated over long years of constant and

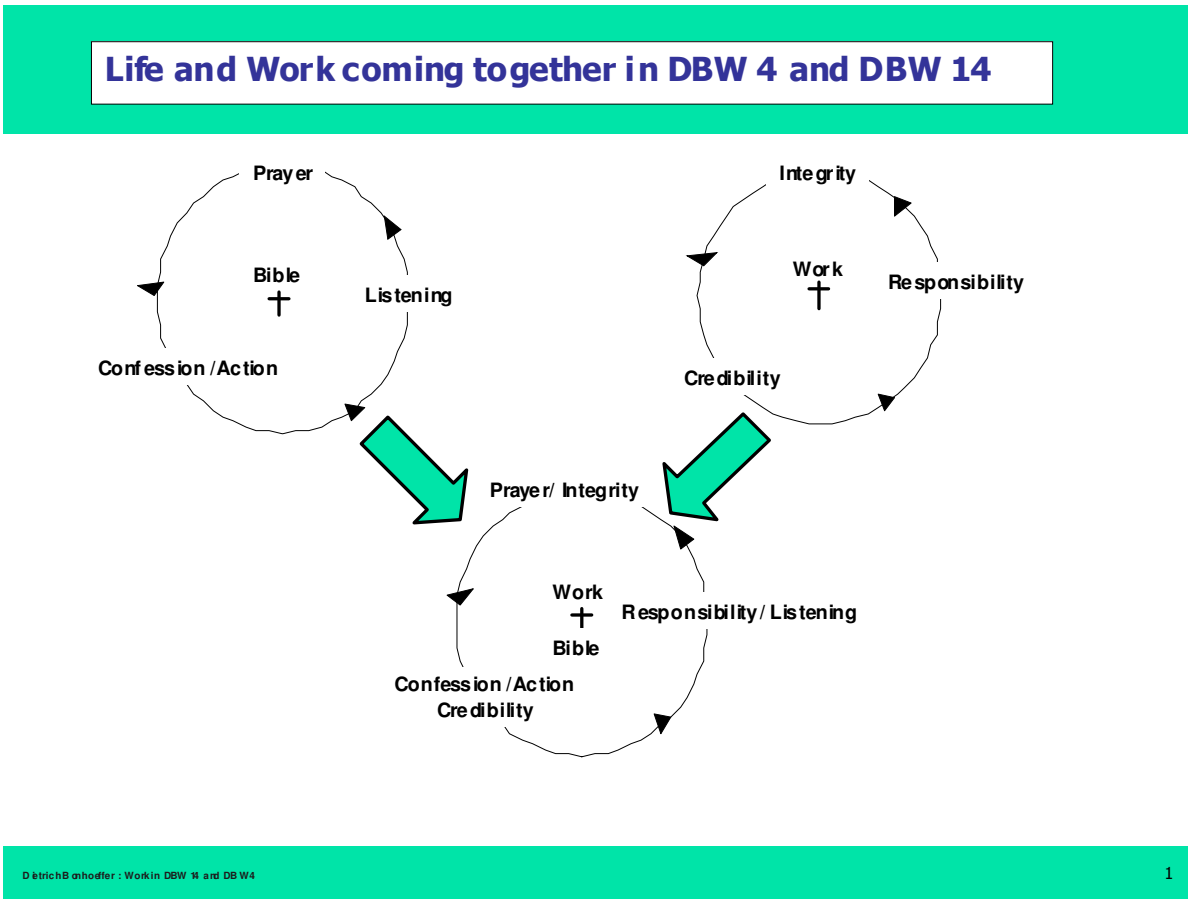
[25] A 1930s NS phrase meaning alignment of all areas of life towards one purpose.

courageous struggle and after receiving the church's blessing the young couple and congregation left the *Schlosskirche* to the sounds of the Horst Wessel song, played on the organ.

The National Socialist party were masters of positioning. According to an article by Wolfgang Benz, entitled 'The camp everybody knew about', March 1933 had seen the launch of the new concept of an '*Arbeitslager*' (work camp: *AL*) in Dachau. This was to be a place in which 'Communists, Socialists and others' could 'learn properly how to work', one where through a 'strict and harsh' [*streng und hart*] education into a community consciousness [*Volksgemeinschaft*] these people could be rehabilitated as useful members of society. Members of the local populace were invited to, and attended, an orchestral concert in April 1934 in front of the *AL* fence, and prisoners were obliged to listen to the event. (http://www.br.de/nachrichten/80-jahre-konzentrationslager-dachau-100.html, 4.3.2013) It was assuredly part of the unhealthy success of National Socialist propaganda that what was in fact a place of brutality was successfully represented, and reported by invited international visitors, as being a place of formation. In similar vein, by June 1934, by way of an example which indicated future priorities and intentions, overseas mission giving from Germany to mission stations had fallen from £30,000 per annum back to £3,000 per annum, a drop of 90%, due almost entirely to new German laws about (not) sending money overseas (DBW 13: 266). The authors of the German 'economic miracle' of autarky wasted no time whatsoever in re-calibrating the priorities of the economy towards work and war preparations. Alongside the mass parades and rallies of the time a kind of collective madness seemed to grip the overwhelming majority of an entire nation. In Breslau, for example, where Bonhoeffer was born, children in the Catholic *Steinschule* were being taught an Evening Prayer which ran (Scholder, 1988, 106):

> Dear God in heaven above / Send angels with your love / To stand around my bed / Where I lay down my head / Your fairest angel there/ with bright and radiant hair / In radiant silver gown / Send to our Hitler down / May he protect his sleep / Him from all danger keep / That next day he may wake / For our dear country's sake.

In complete contrast to this naïve picture of cultic unity, Bonhoeffer's vision for life and work coming together as a unified whole may be captured in my diagram below:

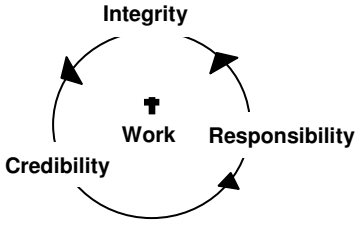


The interlinkage of these three circles may be said to represent key dynamics within Bonhoeffer's thought and teaching at the time. The vision for life and work as a unified whole as shown in the diagram was exemplified at its best during this period for Bonhoeffer when his own work and life came together as never before throughout the course of the Finkenwalde years.The all-encompassing context of *Gleichshaltung* succeeded in bringing forth a clarity of Christian life and witness in the modern era in the lives of some Germans which remains compelling to this day, and in the light of the examples cited above, Bonhoeffer's grasp of the dilemma facing Germany, together with his insistence that people submit themselves to the divine command rather than to the regime, may be the better understood. So for Bonhoeffer, naïve, enthusiastic or unaware supporters of a regime synonymous with brutality had little or no integrity. Bishops, clergy and laity in a church hopelessly sold out to its default mode of compromise with, and accommodation to, the political powers for the sake of its own survival, had lost their integrity, and all credibility. Academics, theologians, preachers and publishers who had misled ordinary citizens into a wrong understanding of salvation, so that inaction could be theologically justified, or re-framed, in the face of evil deeds, and so that God's living word was not rightly proclaimed, and had no chance to be obeyed, had no integrity. To restore integrity, Bonhoeffer saw it as his work and responsibility to bring into the public domain a radical confrontation with the truth of God's call to obedience, a

challenge to bear Christ's cross, a Christ-centred spirituality in order that a new way of being church might come about, for the good of all, and not only that, but as a rescue from the abyss. Thus in the period of work which culminated in his writing of *Nachfolge* we may observe from the outset that Bonhoeffer sensed precisely the urgency of the hour. 'The moment the messengers enter a house and city, they get down to business. Time is valuable and short' (DBW 4: 202). He had been training his students to *mit dem Text ins Gesicht springen* (get into people's face with the text) (DBW 14: 490), and so he began: 'Cheap grace is the mortal enemy of our Church. Our struggle (Kampf) today is for costly grace' (DBW 4: 29). The significance of '*Unser Kampf*' in the context of the prevailing wide circulation of '*Mein Kampf*' would not have been lost on contemporary German readers and hence provides the title of this chapter.[26] What was also a big factor was the prevalence in the Germany of the time of wrong thinking about Luther, and not in one respect only. Scholder makes this apparent (1977, 545, trans. altered):

> The Luther text which had most frequently been quoted prior to this time by the German Christians was one which came from a 1521 letter, originally about the translation of Bible texts into German. '*Germanis meis natus sum, quibus et serviam*'. Throughout Germany this remark had been wont to appear in the form 'I was born for my beloved Germans: it is them I want to serve' repeated ad nauseam as evidence of Luther's *völkisch* mission to the German nation. It was a problem further compounded by, for example, the Erlangen Church Historian Preuss, who intensified this mischief further by demonstrating 'basic parallels' and 'remarkable agreements' between Luther and Hitler. Before their people, Luther and Hitler felt themselves *deeply bound to God'.*

Luther was being mis-used in this respect and also in respect of a tendency to cite his doctrine of the two kingdoms in an over-simplified way so as to facilitate a dualistic approach to life. For example, overzealous proponents of the National Socialist vision could appeal to Luther and say 'Government is sovereign in the earthly realm and must be obeyed and the Church has authority in spiritual matters alone'. Bonhoeffer would have none of it. At the heart of Bonhoeffer's thinking throughout this period (as represented by the drawing) is the Cross and a relationship with Jesus Christ:



[26] Schliepensingen notes that *Nachfolge* itself contrasted strongly with the words of a song prevalent at the time 'Führer, wir folgen dir' (2010, 206).

(The London sermon on Matthew 11: 28-30 is relevant here: DBW 13: 375). The comment by the editors of the DBWE series is also especially apt at this point (DBWE 12: 37, my italics):'[The Christology lectures] may well have contributed the most to providing the foundation for his own *professional life* as he moved Christology to the still centre of his thought'.

This comment captures most helpfully the centrality of work for Bonhoeffer at this stage, whilst, concurrently, noting that his Christological thinking has become clearly focussed. At the same time Bonhoeffer sees work very much as synonymous with responsibility: this is clear for example in the undated text, estimated by editors of DBW series as having being composed around 1.11.33, where he wrote (DBW 12: 416, my italics):

> What Should a Student of Theology do today? … one should not think it necessary to wait for particular experiences of 'being called' to the ministry ... but certainly, it must be what theology is about that enthralls the student – a real readiness to work seriously, to study, and to think. It is not the experience of a call but a determination to do sober, earnest, and *responsible* theological work that is the gateway to the study of theology.

The diagram on the preceding page also shows how for Bonhoeffer, the links between responsibility and integrity are vital, as are those between integrity and credibility: so the 'virtuous circle' (as drawn above) is reinforced. The breaking of any of these linkages would lead to the reverse: a '*Teufelskreis'* [downward spiral] with everything going awry. But with work and Christ at the centre and well aligned with responsibility, then integrity and credibility are reinforced.

The significance of credibility; London as a stepping stone; remuneration and integrity

As regards the journey of development in Bonhoeffer's work and life theology, he was already, by the time of his arrival in London, in a position where the pulse of his theological thought was increasingly attuned to making a close connection between work and responsibility, as he does for example in two adjacent phrases in the report of 1934 of the annual meeting of the parish (DBW 13: 291). But this was not all. Bonhoeffer saw that the parishioners of Sydenham had more responsibility for their own destiny than they had perhaps realized. In his inaugural sermon in London he began by including the following challenge to his parishioners (DBW 13: 315):

> There is really only one question for a congregation to ask of its pastor: Is he offering us the eternal word of God, the word of life, wherever he can, in the pulpit and in daily life? Or is he giving us stones instead of bread? Is he giving us placebos that are perhaps more pleasant to take, but do not satisfy our souls? Give us the bread that fills our hungry souls! This should be the daily plea with which the congregation stands before its pastor, just as the pastor should stand before God and pray for this gift for his congregation as its pastor, their shepherd.

Bonhoeffer saw and felt the challenge keenly. By this time the vital work of resisting Nazism was for him, in practical terms, almost equal in importance to the actual salaried work of pastor of the German churches which he was employed to perform. Yet it would be a mistake to assume that Bonhoeffer short-changed his London parishioners. Keith Clements' answer in *Bonhoeffer and Britain* to the question as to, in the face of all his other activities, whether Bonhoeffer had any energy left over for the work of actual pastoring work amongst his congregation is 'an emphatic 'Yes'' (2006, 66). The rapidly-won and sustained support of such a parishioner as the highly influential Baron Schröder for Bonhoeffer is testimony to that. It was hence highly significant and apposite that his salary was paid not by the *Reichskirche* but by the local congregations and that his housing was provided on the usual ministerial tied basis. Bonhoeffer's disdain for, and financial independence from, the *Reichskirche*, for whom he could not possibly have worked at the time while maintaining his integrity, is further illustrated by his deliberate decision to allow the correspondence relating to his overseas service pension rights and retirement insurance to lapse. Bonhoeffer was apparently little motivated by financial remuneration. But he needed money to live, not least for his generous hosting, the almost daily calls to Berlin (Bethge, 2000, 335) the series of telegrams (340) and the 'frequent visits to Germany' (only one of which was paid for by the *Reichskirche*) (364). These provide evidence of not only Bonhoeffer's commitment to the cause of being in opposition, but also of his financial ability to serve it. The editors of the DBW series allude to the notable extent of the financial costs which Bonhoeffer incurred in 'oppositional activity' in the introduction to DBW 13. Even the recent discovery in 2010 of the Cromwell letters relating to the 1935 time period provide evidence of further international travel, and generosity, undocumented hitherto, which Bonhoeffer undertook and funded.[27] Later, in 1936, Bethge documents Bonhoeffer financing the *Bruderhaus* out of his own pocket (468) and also paying for two ordinands to fly to the Olympics in Berlin so that they could experience not only the games but also air travel (541). Bonhoeffer's stipend in 1936 and for the rest of his life (not including any allowances later made for inflation) was 360 Reichmarks a month (347), which for one person compares unfavourably with the average weekly wage in 1933 of RM 320 (Scholder, 1977, 543)

[27] Dietrich Bonhoeffer *Letters to London: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's previously unpublished correspondence with Ernst Cromwell 1935-36*, SPCK 2013.

and slightly better with Viktor Klemperer's monthly pension of RM 484 for two people (Klemperer,1999, 191). It can hardly have been an adequate sum to fund Bonhoeffer's lifestyle and generosity. All of this illustrates three important points: first, the extent to which, in the London period, Bonhoeffer was already working on this (wider) project of resistance to the National Socialist cause, and second, the extent to which, in pursuit of this greater work, Bonhoeffer enjoyed, not just in London, but for the ensuing period of his life, a financial freedom which can hardly have been funded by his own meager pastor's salary, supplemented as it was only by the occasional venture into equally poorly remunerated translation services, and after 1938, some income from the sale of his more popular published works. Certainly he would not at this stage have been in receipt of any income from the sale of his first two published books. It seems impossible that not only the vast costs of the London telephone bill, as documented by Bethge (327) but also the wider, well-rehearsed refrain of unstinting Bonhoeffer generosity, was not funded at least to some extent by the generosity of both his London parishioners (while he worked there) and (more likely throughout the remaining period) of his parents. This aspect has been somewhat neglected in Bonhoeffer study until now (with the exception of Schliepensingen, cf . 2010, 246) and this should be corrected. But third, and crucially, for this chapter, Bonhoeffer himself remained financially independent of the hopelessly compromised and hence heretical established church. The foundational basis upon which he would build his experience as a pastor was as one who was in no way financially 'in hock' to the apparent job security of established and compromised systems. It was an integrity which meant a great deal to him, for theological as well as personal reasons. Later, in 1937, Bonhoeffer would give clear teaching on just this point to his seminarians in a lecture on Church-Community nurture and development about the critical need for the worker, in order to be credible, to disconnect his or her own financial and other needs from the (sacramental) work of preaching and proclaiming the Gospel. The captured text of DBW 14, with my own abbreviations, runs (DBW 14: 821, trans. altered):

> The *proclaimer* (of the Gospel) *the apostle*, performs his service *without payment*, according to the command of Jesus …'The worker is worth their wages' (Luke 10,7) and yet receives no pay, only food for a day. (EB[28] note: the pay is daily nourishment but not security for the next day). Paul attaches great significance to this notion. Practices a profession himself. Mark of false apostles that they make a business of it (2 Cor. 11,7,13ff., Titus 1,12, 1 Peter 5). Paul does not want to compromise the purity of the proclamation or its credibility. Credibility always called into question by job [*Beruf*] i.e. a monthly wage. Repeatedly insist that there is no inner necessity, but for the sake of money (cf. Kierkegaard *The individual and the Church*).

[28] Eberhard Bethge

The allusion to Kierkegaard here is significant as what would become the key output of the Finkenwalde time was *Nachfolge*, a book which owes much to the text mentioned here. But the two main points to highlight are first, the significance of integrity and credibility, and second, that in order to be able to offer this teaching to his illegal students with his own credibility intact, Bonhoeffer first had to make that real in his own life, and in his coming to London that is precisely what he achieved. Bonhoeffer's focus on the Sermon of the Mount between 1932 and 1936 would have confronted him head on with the integrity of Jesus. He included a section on this theme in *Nachfolge* as well (DBW 4: 200):

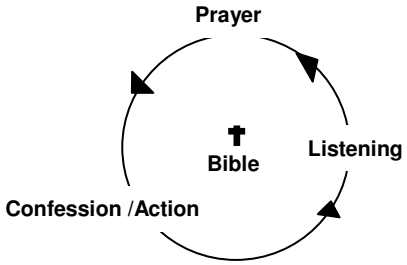
> Being a messenger of Jesus does not grant any personal rights; it does not entitle one to respect or power. That does not change when the free messenger of Jesus has turned into an official pastor.

It is only from such a basis of personal integrity and credibility that Bonhoeffer would be able to operate effectively with his later students. Because the subject of the lure of the false security of money away from the Confessing Church would soon become such a critical and pressing issue it is of great significance that Bonhoeffer's own financial and remuneration circumstances are understood as I have explained. In a letter to H. Rossler Bonhoeffer calls the *Reichkirche* a 'pseudochurch' and describes the foreign church office as 'betraying believers to the pseudochurch over the *schnöden Sold*, the filthy lucre of vicars' stipends'(DBW 13: 239, my translation). This understanding enables us more fully to appreciate the strategic and theological value of Bonhoeffer's decision to take work in London. Credibility is the whole foundation of the worker's command to preach the Gospel especially in any leadership-related context. The topic of credibility was of particular significance as a central argument of this thesis in that in his *in via* theology of work, Bonhoeffer was coming to see work and responsibility as being closely linked, and as a consequence, it is logical that he would place a particular emphasis on credibility, as only a credible life could form the base for a life of committed discipleship. Bonhoeffer would continue throughout his time in Finkenwalde to underline to his students the importance of credibility. Bethge's lecture notes, for example in DBW 14: 421, make precisely this point. Accordingly it is unsurprising and worthy of note that the relevant biblical passage explaining that the worker must offer the Gospel free of charge, in 1 Corinthians 1: 10-17, was underlined in Bonhoeffer's English Bible, which he acquired in 1934 (De Gruchy, 1976, 214). It was this credibility, albeit amidst transience, which underscored his approach to resistance. In June 1934 he wrote to his close friend E. Sutz not only about the Sermon on the Mount, India, and stirrings about moving on, but also with a proleptic sense of his life's work (and in that sense, his real work) and also its temporary nature:

> And while I'm working with the church opposition with all my might it's perfectly clear to me that *this* opposition is only a very temporary transitional phase on the way to an opposition of a very different kind…I believe that all Christendom should be praying with us for the coming of resistance 'to the point of shedding blood' (DBW 13: 128).

A life in order, to enable credible work

During this period the teaching which Bonhoeffer delivered has the Bible as well as the Cross at the centre of the picture:



One seminarian wrote '*Die Bibel steht in der Miltelpunkt unserer Arbeit*' [The Bible stands at the heart of our work] (DBW 14: 91). So perceived as central and so diligently and devastatingly applied was the Bible to every situation encountered that the authors of the *Nachwort* to DBW 14 comment that what discipleship in Finkenwalde was about was: Bible reading and prayer, Discipline and Community, Teaching, Witnessing/confessing, and Bible interpretation, and that not for nothing was the Bible at the beginning and the ending of the list! (DBW 14: 993). Bonhoeffer's tell-tale indication of a pastor who was making a good difference in a parish was that the congregation is reading the Bible (DBW 14: 489). Accordingly, the Bible is drawn in the circle above as being, next to the Cross, central to life. In conjunction with this, Bonhoeffer's students would soon pick up that an 'orientation of listening' was foundational in the Christian life, and was part of the life of prayerfulness to which every believer is called. Christian action and obedience are the result of what goes beforehand (as shown in the diagram).This *orientation of listening* is foundational to the work of a Christian believer. It showed through in a very different way of reading the Bible from that which might have been adopted, for example, in a university setting. Bonhoeffer wrote to Rüdiger Schleicher in faith-sharing mode and spoke movingly of how much reading the Bible on a regular basis had come to mean to him. Reading back over the letter the reader is clearly able to observe how for Bonhoeffer it was a listening process which at the same time fed him, as he wrestled with attempts to connect more deeply with his weekly text, so as to hear it. He mentioned: 'I know that without doing that I couldn't live properly' (DBW 14: 147). In order to ensure all ordinands would become accustomed to such a listening orientation, Bonhoeffer

charged all seminarians with the task of beginning each day with a period of silent meditation. Considering the Finkenwalde ministry as a whole, this orientation, in line with the diagram above, could be said to encompass the *Arkansdiziplin* [discipline of the secret] which Bonhoeffer would go on to teach his students, and similarly, the *Exercitia* (a pattern of spiritual exercises which he would incorporate into his formative training), could be included as part of the work of prayer. But the work was essentially an orientation of listening. Bonhoeffer made this apparent at the Fanö Conference in August 1934, when he conducted the morning devotions, at a time when ecumenical work became at this period in particular for Bonhoeffer distinguishable as good work (cf. also DBW 14: 267). The text states that (DBW 13: 189):

> (One delegate) reported ... Bonhoeffer reminded us that our primary object was not to commend our own views, national or individual, but to hear what God would say to us'. (Another delegate) wrote: 'at our first devotions we were urgently told, as a watchword for our entire conference, that our work [*Arbeit*] cannot and must not consist in anything but listening together to what the *Lord* says, and in praying together that we may hear aright. Listening in faith to the words of the Bible, hearing one another as listeners who obey, this is the core of all ecumenical work.

Listening links to a life centred on prayer

Thus a listening orientation was foundational, as was a commitment to the work of prayer, and prayer in itself is linked to reading the Scriptures. One seminarian wrote 'We have learned (afresh) to read the Bible praying' (DBW 14: 91). Bonhoeffer considered that for a Christian, especially for a minister, prayer is work, indeed a kind of work that has priority over other work (DBW 14: 512):

> (The daily meditation on Scripture)… should begin every pastor's day - before he speaks to others, he should let God talk to him - before he meets others, he should first meet Christ, - before making decisions, listen to God's decision concerning him. Devotion beneath the word: not exegesis, but also not enthusiastic rapture, but rather <u>*completely*</u> conscious prayer – (prayer is work!).[29]

Bonhoeffer went to some lengths to stress the importance of making time for the work of prayer, for which he considered the morning the most suitable occasion. As mentioned above,

[29] The German editors in a footnote draw attention to Luther's comment: (Luther WA. TR 6 Nr. 6751) 'As a cobbler makes a shoe and a dressmaker a dress, so should a Christian pray. A Christian's handiwork is prayer'.

Finkenwaldians were taught to meditate, not without some levels of dissent. The philosophy was simple, as expressed in the instructions provided (DBW 14: 945):

> *Why do I meditate? Because I am a Christian*, and because for that very reason every day is lost to me in which I have not deepened my knowledge of God's word in Holy Scripture.

There was another side to this. Just as the believer took time to drink deeply of God's word, so too would a work happen in the one taking the time to spend with God, so that it was a relational transaction. In a paper entitled 'How do I meditate?' Bonhoeffer wrote (DBW 14: 512):

> Just as the words of someone dear to you can follow you around the entire day, so also should the Word of Scripture resonate in your ears incessantly and work on you. Just as you don't analyze the words of someone dear to you and instead simply accept them as they are spoken to you, so also accept the Word of Scripture, pondering it in your heart as Mary did.

Bonhoeffer taught that the pastor must pray more than others and that a conversation with the Word in oneself was needed before the Scriptures could be interpreted to others (DBW 14: 946-7ff.). The observant reader may discern here Bonhoeffer's own productivity orientation showing through here as he encouraged himself that even if there was nothing to show for it at the end, it was indeed a good use of time! In a meditation on the subject he wrote (DBW 14: 873):

> It is not our own plans and worries, nor even our overeagerness to get to work that should fill the first moments of each new day, but rather God's liberating grace, God's blessed nearness. God prepared the quietness of the first morning for God alone. And thus it should belong to God. The morning prayer belongs before our daily work. Only thus do we perform that work in fulfillment of the divine commandment. One hour must be put aside each morning for quiet prayer and worship together. Truly, this is not wasted time. How else are we to face the tasks, tribulations and temptations of the day?

This exhortation speaks into Bonhoeffer's understanding of the place of action in the life of the Christian minister. People are called to action where grace is proclaimed, otherwise grace turns, for that person, into judgement. But action that is based on the work of listening, really hearing, and the work of prayer is the more likely to be fruitful. In the lesson plan for confirmation class one student noted: 'Hearing stands above all action' (DBW 14: 791). An initial action would often be confession to another Christian, a practice upon which Bonhoeffer was quietly insistent. Thus the work of prayer has, simply, a higher priority (as shown in the drawing on p.129). Only with this

understanding would the threefold engagement with God's word take place as it should, in the pulpit, at the study desk, and at the prayer station (DBW 14: 510). For Bonhoeffer, when action had this kind of a basis, such as the action of his grandmother in circumventing the Jewish boycott, it had the vital hallmark of integrity and suitable credibility.

The potential unity of life and work as protest

Bonhoeffer understood the everyday [*weltlich*] world precisely in its everydayness and saw the church as being there wherever people are serious about a form of Christian discipleship that demands no less than one's whole life – wherever faith is lived out in practice. With this in view the centre of one's attention becomes the question, which Bonhoeffer raised in both the preface and chapter one, - how does one give a Christian form to daily life as a person working in the world? (cf. DB 4: 22, 23, 41, DBW 14: 147 and editors' notes 4: 326, 5: 144). The simple answer for Bonhoeffer is that one does not separate Jesus' commands from everyday life, an insistence that will be made even more forcefully in his later writings. For him, it is largely in the workplace where a life lived out with integrity in the ordinary and the everyday is a life which, based on the words of the Sermon on the Mount, will be different (Matthew 5, 10). Bonhoeffer knew also the importance, costly though that often was, of the disciple's difference being visible.[30] In this respect we have already observed that Bonhoeffer's theology was developing consistently along the lines of seeing work and responsibility as being crucially linked and here in *Nachfolge* we see a further example of the tell-tale juxtaposition of these two words *Beruf and Verantwortung* [work and responsibility] (DBW 4: 152). But there are further good reasons for suggesting that Bonhoeffer considers the workplace as a primary locus where discipleship is made good, or not. As we observed in chapter one, in the Germany of the 1930s work, for millions of ordinary people, genuinely meant the difference between eating or not, and hence, trusting God for work and in work and thanking God for the provision of work when it could be found was the most complete expression of everyday faith 'where it counts'. Another reason is, as we have traced in chapter two and throughout, the importance of work to Bonhoeffer personally, and in his milieu, and another, briefly alluded to in chapter one, is that as the National Socialists successfully positioned themselves as the authors and providers of the economic recovery through work, it was of vital importance that a Christian counter-input to this political positioning message was 'out there'. Thus Bonhoeffer wrote (DBW 4: 172, trans. altered):

> The next day, the next hour, is completely out of our hands' reach. It is meaningless to behave as if we could achieve anything by worry. We can change nothing about the

[30] For further examples of Bonhoeffer's underlining of the need for visibility see DBW 11: 33 and DBW 4: 261.

> conditions of the world … It is not worry, it is not even work which produces daily bread, but God the Father. The birds and lilies do not work or spin, but they are fed and clothed; they receive their daily share without worry. They need the goods of the world only for daily life. They do not collect them. By not collecting they praise the creator, not by their industry, their work, their worry, but by receiving daily and simply the gifts God gives. That is how birds and lilies become examples for disciples. Jesus dissolves the connection between work and food, which is conceived in terms of cause and effect apart from God. He does not value daily bread as the reward for work. Instead, he speaks of the carefree simplicity of those who follow the ways of Jesus and receive everything from God.

It was a simple message, but a vital one. It was one connected with Bonhoeffer's own journey as someone who took responsibility seriously, not least because there is at a human level such a deep connection between a heightened sense of responsibility and a heightened sense of anxiety about life and the world. This in turn can for some be associated with a pattern of depression, and indeed depression was something experienced at frequent albeit intermittent intervals by Bonhoeffer. True to form, there were very few people who knew about the real inner state of his feelings on this issue; in fact, only one. In prison in 1943 Bonhoeffer wrote to Bethge (DBW 8: 187) 'You are the only person who knows that "*acedia*" - "*tristitia*" with all its ominous consequences has often haunted me'. Bethge further documents (2000, 39) that 'Bonhoeffer became acquainted early with two companions whom he feared, *tristitia* and *accidie*'.[31] For Bonhoeffera phase that was noticeable in particular came in 1936, around the time of the death of his grandmother. At this time Bethge wrote (2000, 506);

> The second half of the term was a bad time for Bonhoeffer. There were days when he was overcome by what he later called his "*accidie, tristitia*"… [T]hese depressions were not occasioned by feelings of deprivation or by vain desires. They tended to beset him precisely when he realized how strongly others believed in the success of his path and placed great faith in his leadership … He would be overwhelmed by self-contempt and a sense of inadequacy so strong that it threatened to rob his happiest and most successful undertsakings of all meaning. His intellect had gained an evil ascendancy over faith. Then , in private confession, he would seek and find a renewed innocence and sense of vocation.

Here it is evident that part of the restoration which confession would bring to Bonhoeffer, often with Bethge, was related to work being restored to a sense of rightness. One senses that for the responsible Bonhoeffer, work had got out of hand, and needed re-framing and re-contextualising

[31] Cf. also DBWE 8: 180, footnotes 9-11 in particular. Additional Bethge commentary on this subject may be found on pp. 506 and 822-23. The variances in the spelling of *accidie/acedia* are as given in the texts.

within a wider sense of God's provision and goodness. There was also another bout of depression for Bonhoeffer in 1938, when especially the attacks on him from other Christians reached their level of maximum intensity. So the message that God is sovereign and will provide, that God gives peace in the face of our anxiety and holds all things together for good in the end, was one with which Bonhoeffer was readily able to resonate, as well as one he was more than willing to proclaim. It was a matter of vitality and of urgency as well as a message of hope. God in Christ is the sole author and provider, and if a nation that has turned away from faith is ever to be restored, the church must recount afresh this tale and preach again what is central in the Christian faith, the call of Jesus to follow him, and trust him alone for work. It was a message that Luther had re-discovered and which Bonhoeffer amidst all the challenges of his own generation sought urgently to convey afresh.

Because the world Bonhoeffer saw around him was one that was increasingly bereft of compassion, peace, forgiveness of enemies, and purity of heart - all the things called for in the Sermon on the Mount - and because that same world was demonstrating an increasing willingness to exploit the poor and oppress those seeking justice - Bonhoeffer called Christians to engage the world in hand-to-hand combat, in and through the daily world of work. It was a call which Luther had answered, and in citing Luther, Bonhoeffer framed his call to obedience in the sharpest terms, so as to clarify the real Luther (DBW 4: 34):

> Luther's path out of the monastery back to the world meant the sharpest attack that had been launched on the world since early Christianity: this time the attack was a frontal assault. Following Jesus now had to be lived out in the midst of the world … complete obedience to Jesus' commands now had to be carried out in the daily world of work.

Given that this call to arms was so all-encompassing, Bonhoeffer saw that it had absolutely no chance of ever happening in and through the lives of so-called believers who might attend church for an hour or so on a Sunday morning, and who would then continue on with un-changed lives, so that particular myth needed exploding! The faith that Bonhoeffer saw the Christian called to was inextricably linked to a whole-of-life obedience. To live a Sunday-morning, comfortable faith would be to demonstrate the profoundest ingratitude to the God whose Son died for humankind on the Cross. Bonhoeffer pointed out that it would be the greatest misrepresentation of what Luther achieved by his re-discovery of grace to conclude, effectively, that it meant a '*carte blanche*' to living as one pleased, without any need for genuine obedience to Jesus' commands. He saw that things are really the other way around – focused, again, around the believer's everyday work (DBW 4: 35, trans. altered):

> For Luther, on the contrary, a Christian's everyday work in the world is justified only in that one's protest against the world is thereby most sharply expressed. A Christian's everyday work in the world receives new recognition from the gospel only to the extent that it is carried on while following Jesus.

Thus the workplace theology which Bonhoeffer expressed was that the disciple was called to engage the world in hand-to-hand combat, and that in great measure through work. It was none other than a summons to suffering and persecution, to the way of the Cross, as Jesus made clear in the Sermon on the Mount, because if the attack was visible and had integrity, as a sign of its genuineness what was to follow would be a persecution by the world.The integrity of the disciple would be attested to by the level of attack and suffering the disciple experienced, just as Jesus had. As with master, so with servant. Bonhoeffer saw clearly that the workplace had already become for the believer a flashpoint for the conflict between the world and the obedient disciple, leading in numerous instances to public dismissal from office (cf. DBW 4: 62 ff.), and in what he wrote here he accurately foresaw that the conflict between the obedient believer and the world would intensify in the domain of the workplace (cf. DBW 4: 263). What that would mean at the time of writing for the likes of Karl Barth, subsequent to dismissal from his own work role, was emigration to a place from which resistance could be continued: what Bonhoeffer envisaged for the obedient disciples he addresses in *Nachfolge* in their own places of work was a stand of high risk and costly resistance. But it was not to be a stand made foolishly or heedlessly, but rather, out of the still centre of an entirely different inner life. That, in turn, Bonhoeffer saw as being founded on Scripture, and nurtured by a life of holiness, a life which had integrity. The centrality of Scripture was not open to question: given all that has been said about the importance of the Bible in the preceding two sections, it comes as no surprise to state that the Bible, correctly interpreted, was what Bonhoeffer wanted to preach from, and about. He asked his students (DBW 14: 511) 'Are we so familiar with Scripture that we could provide scriptural support for every sentence in our sermons and disputations?' It was a standard he asked of himself before asking it of others. One has the sense that his own articulation of the most fearful danger for a preacher, that he would become like the 'priest who is always satisfied with his sermon, to whom Luther's comfort becomes the pillow-cushion of his laziness and self-satisfaction' (DBW 14: 501) would not have been too readily applicable in criticism of Bonhoeffer. The encyclopaedic summary of Scriptural references in DBW 17 is eloquent testimony to his own knowledge and use of the Bible. But behind this exhortation to an ever higher standard of Scriptural knowledge lay not a desire or spur to increase one's own fame, but rather a will to work faithfully and to serve prayerfully and obediently (DBW 14: 511):

> ...'a humble disposition is better than an intelligent one' (Proverbs). All study of

> Scripture should serve humility and an improved ability to pray and to preach. We do not study (it) in order to become scholars and to write books: 'of making many books there is no end'. Instead: We study it for the church-community of Christ, for ministry.

What the reader discerns here is the re-emergence of the motif of integrity and responsibility in work, through being a genuine servant of others, in a way that facilitates the potential unity of life and work (and in this case, work as protest) that Bonhoeffer so aspired to. In much the same way, it continues to be an important *cantus firmus* for Bonhoeffer, related to *Predigtamt*, [the office and work of preaching] in that in Finkenwalde he taught that the word must be handled with integrity, because mis-treating or wrongly valuing the text has the disastrous consequence of preventing the coming of Christ. The whole task of a preacher, he insisted, is that the Church-Community should become mature [*mündig*] in its use of Scripture. Accordingly, for the preacher, the text is not to be treated as a springboard for one's own thoughts. He reminded his students that 'the word of God alone possesses its own, inherent purpose, one that we are to serve, one that possesses its own life' (DBW 14: 496).

How preaching supports the work of protest

Having mentioned earlier in some detail how Bonhoeffer approached the work of pastoral visits it is understandable that he counselled adopting a similar approach to the use of the Bible in preaching. He advised: '*mit dem Text ins Gesicht springen* [get into people's face with the text] (DBW 14: 490, my translation). In this respect, perhaps in line with his own character and personality, Bonhoeffer stated that the homily is the most appropriate form of interpreting a text, as thematic preaching runs the risk of neglecting the text. He commended to his students the wisdom of Augustine that the art of preaching is: '*ut probet, delectet, flectat* = (that one) may instruct, gladden, move' (DBW 14: 492) and that they adopted a varying style according to sermon type. This art, the work of preaching a sermon, Bonhoeffer maintained, has a two-fold goal, that of first establishing and then the building-up of the Church-Community. In his thinking, both the establishing and building-up work together towards the same purpose, such that church is to be found where the word of Christ is preached in truth, where the sacraments are administered according to God's ordinances, and where the name of Jesus is freely confessed. It is a battle where the stakes are high, and accordingly, integrity in handling Scripture is vital. He made this clear in his fifth course on Homiletics when he wrote (DBW 14: 529, trans. altered):

> Only where Christ is preached is God present … As a witnessing to Christ, the sermon is a struggle with demons. Nowhere does the devil lie in wait for prey as much as where a congregation assembles. Nothing is more important to the devil than to prevent Christ from

> coming to the congregation. That is why Christ must be preached … So if preaching is only a witness to the testimony of Scripture, for this reason one must hold in great respect [*Ehrfurcht*] the word of Scripture.

In contrast to an integrity of this kind, Bonhoeffer observed much in contemporary preaching around him which he found unacceptable. He wrote that one of his strongest objections about 'today's preaching is that it is incapable of really leading a person to life, therefore one of the primary elements of the sermon must be to witness to the living Christ' (DBW 14: 515). In this respect the work of responsible preaching with integrity towards Scripture, for Bonhoeffer, in contemporary proclamation, must essentially be one of appropriate interpretation, leading the hearer towards living obediently in the present situation. He went on, re-affirming the centrality of the Cross, to explain further that (DBW 14: 405):

> Hence the movement is not from the word of Scripture to the present, but rather from the present to the word of Scripture, where it then abides! Hence seemingly away from the present in order to move away from the false present to the authentic present.

In this respect Bonhoeffer wrote approvingly of Ignatian meditation as helpful for the work of preaching as it connects with, and is firmly linked to, the text. Bonhoeffer was often unafraid to challenge others when he observed things he felt were wrong, such that when he saw a lack of integrity in the work of preaching, he was not averse, particularly in the challenging or even life-threatening circumstances he and all his ordinands faced on a daily basis, to confronting it. Where preaching was not supporting the work of protest, life and work were not in unity. We find a story which illustrates this in a letter Bonhoeffer wrote to Bethge on 2.8.36 from a holiday location in Misdroy. He had attended a morning church service conducted by a pastor called P. Kohler from Greifswald whom he describes as middle of the road but as having given a pure 'German Christian' sermon. Bonhoeffer went into the vestry and described the events which ensued (DBW 14: 211):

> First my question: Why do you not preach Christ? Why do you send us away hungry? First, a bit of resistance. Question: Do you still even want to listen? - Reversal. Then outright capitulation: "I cannot preach what I do not have" and "Yes, you are probably right…" That was the end. A shattered pastor. It's so sad.

For some this will come across as a shocking attack on an inadequate preacher with whom Bonhoeffer had no pastoral link. But if we understand the incomparable importance of responsible work to Bonhoeffer, and the significance of integrity and credibility, and how all these things were

fused together in the extraordinary privilege of communicating the message of life itself in the medium of preaching, perhaps the exchange will appear differently.

Different from the world; The work of holiness; credibility and cross in a context of persecution

This next section looks briefly in DBW 4 at how Bonhoeffer saw a life of holiness being made good in preparation for the persecution that would inevitably come. It should be recalled at this juncture that back in 1926 (as cited in chapter 2) Bonhoeffer had long had a sense (within the framework of dependence on God) that work on oneself in obedience to the divine command, (a life that was different and had integrity) was good work (DBW 9: 515):

> Let us not delude ourselves. God will not drop a city from the heavens, and God's holy commandments insist on being fulfilled. We must work with our dirty hands. We must labour even if it is only God who labours for eternity. We must work on ourselves, our families, our people, and our church, and still realize that everything is in vain if it is only we who build.

It was a different inner orientation, which had listening to God through prayer at its heart: the work of holy living. For Bonhoeffer, at work or at rest, the obedient disciple of Jesus Christ marched to a different drumbeat and had an inner, not-visible-to-the-outsider life of complete trust in, and dependence upon, God. It was to be an orientation founded upon listening, prayer and Scripture. Throughout this chapter and *Nachfolge* we discern clearly the priority which Bonhoeffer both role-modelled and encouraged of sure-footedness in Scripture and of acquiring an ever-deepening familiarity with both Scripture and the principles and practices surrounding its application. It was a vital and relevant matter in the context of persecution which the ordinands inhabited, not least in the light of the sobering awareness, for example, that to some arrested brothers Bibles were only first handed out some weeks after their arrest, and that in such an eventuality it would quickly show how much Scripture each believer was carrying with them from memory (DBW 14: 260). Being able to bring Scripture to others under conditions of arrest would certainly make believers 'different from the world'. This relationship was also to be a place of hidden prayerfulness (cf. DBW 4: 157) and a place of hidden piety (cf. DBW 4: 165) as well as hidden righteousness. It would be accomplished in straightforwardness, serving more and asking less than it reflected (DBW 4: 155): 'The only required reflection for disciples is to be completely oblivious, completely unreflective in obedience, in discipleship, in love'.

Such an orientation would not, for example, rest content if there is a lack of reconciliation with a brother or sister in Christ (cf. DBW 4: 122).[32] There was no place in such an orientation for loyalty oaths such as those demanded by the regime, there was no need for such things as the disciple is simply placed in the unquestionable presence of the all-knowing God. This orientation of holiness would know what it means to have (DBW 14: 792):

> …given to God everything that belongs to me, keeping nothing for myself, seeking after God's will in all I do, thinking of Him gladly, being pleased to pray to Him, enjoying hearing and receiving his word.

The theme of credibility is quick to re-surface, and here it does so around the Bible: Bonhoeffer trained his students that a true pastoral conversation will happen only when there is for the person doing the pastoral visit no subject more important than the spreading of the gospel. It had to be lived and felt by the person doing the visit and only then would it be believed as reality by the person receiving the visitor. He continued (DBW 14: 571):

> The pastor must be overflowing with that which does indeed fill the heart. He cannot stop talking about what he has experienced … Everything depends on whether the things of the Bible are a reality for the pastor, how much he knows about them, and that his heart has truly been overcome by them.

Amidst all this, Bonhoeffer conveyed to his illegal ordinands a sense of the great privilege of being invited in to a person's home. At one level the pastoral visitor is to take the person more seriously than they do themselves. One of the profoundest things he taught on the subject is that all pastoral work is proclamation to the individual (DBW 14: 555), and, given the seriousness with which Bonhoeffer regarded proclamation, that is a task of no small stature. What is relevant to the way Bonhoeffer viewed work (in that, as we shall see later in this chapter, it is living out the Gospel in the everyday world of work which truly fired Bonhoeffer) is that here, in a person's home, the Gospel is being communicated to a person in their everyday life. But because Christ wants to come to people in their home and be honoured in their home, and the home is the place of Christ-likeness, Bonhoeffer cautioned proceeding with respect and modesty (DBW 14: 572):

[32] In this respect it should be recalled that for Bonhoeffer, relational integrity was of paramount importance. The relational practices which he conceived and developed at Finkenwalde, initially resisted, of not speaking about another person unless they were present, of going for a long walk at least once a term with every member of the course, of devoting Sunday recreationally to the Community, and of confession, (DBW 4: 287) helped in the end to foster and develop a relational integrity which vitalized the entire community.

> not as impertinent observer, inspector, as someone who has the opportunity to sniff around in someone else's secrets, but as one in whom there can be confidence that he will make proper use of the privilege of being a guest.

In this approach the reader discerns that what was being conveyed to the Finkenwalde ordinands was practical wisdom for pastoral work. The same might also be said of Bonhoeffer's counsel to adopt entirely different methods of approach for those 'indifferent' and the 'educated'. For the former, he commended a direct approach, for the latter, he suggested that a reserved and quiet empathy and listening - a 'let the other person ask' style - is likely to be more effective (cf. DBW 14: 575-579). In this the motif of listening appears afresh (I refer to the diagram on p. 129 above). The same (about practical wisdom) could also be said of Bonhoeffer's commendation for those hostile to the Church that the first and foremost thing to do in relation to them is to serve them silently [*Der stumme Dienst der Tat*] (DBW 14: 579) and few would contradict the pastoral value of such a pronouncement. All of the words of such believers should be nothing but truth, so that 'nothing requires verification by oath' (DBW 4: 131). The attitude towards work of one with such an orientation was that work could never be an end in itself (cf. DBW 4: 264). It was to be the life orientation of a heart which trusts in God alone, an active expression of trust which also brings genuine freedom, whatever the state or nature of the work the believer undertakes (cf. DBW 4:70). All of this made the genuine believer very 'different from the world'. Work was to be done in a 'different spirit' from the world, even to the point of allowing others to gain an unfair advantage over the believer who works in trade and commerce, following this through even to refusing to go to a (pagan) law court (DBW 4: 264). Correspondingly the church of such disciples would look different: marked out in obedience to the Holy Spirit, members of such a church-community would move through the world 'like a sealed passenger train passing through foreign territory' (DBW 4: 276). The surety of belonging was paramount and if anchored and genuine would at times not be visible even to the believer herself (cf. DBW 4: 295). The believer would trust and know where work comes from in a way that re-connects humankind with the entirety of God's creation in an orientation which has at the same time the vital and liberating effect of reducing anxiety (cf. DBW 14: 813, together with three Scripture references, also DBW 4: 265). But with such a different inner orientation, disciples, as Jesus' workers, could 'travel lightly' indeed (DBW 4: 201). But this orientation has put self on the Cross, and Christ on the throne (DBW 4: 81, trans. altered):

> [The Cross] is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering that everyone has to experience is the call which summons us away from our attachments to this world. It is that death of the old self in the encounter with Christ .Whenever Christ calls us, his call leads us to death. Whether we, like the first disciples must leave house and work to follow him, or whether with Luther we leave the monastery and go into an ordinary job – in both

> cases the same death awaits us, namely death in Jesus Christ, the death of our old self caused by the call of Jesus.

In dying with Christ, a believer with this orientation would receive the blessing promised that they become Christ's co-workers and helpmates, and hence their final thought would be guided away from themselves and to (DBW 4: 211) 'the purpose of their work: the salvation of the faith-community'.

An obvious question arises out of this sketch: if the believer were being prepared, through an inner life that marked the disciple out as different from the word, for the persecution to come, a persecution that would inevitably be linked to genuine discipleship, would the practice of allowing others to gain an unfair advantage over believers in law, trade and commerce be workable? This issue remains undeveloped. Bonhoeffer himself later said in relation to this book that he saw some of the dangers in it, though he still stood by it, and he goes on to reflect further on this subject, as noted above.

The Confessing Church as employer: loss of integrity - a parting of the ways

One thing we have seen clearly demonstrated above is the importance of integrity in work to Bonhoeffer. This links at a profound level with something that happened at this time for him and which until now has been neglected and of which accordingly the significance has been under-appreciated, relating to work. R. Benson, much admired by Bonhoeffer, wrote in *The Way of Holiness*: 'In Holy Scripture the *heart* is always mentioned as the agent of moral discernment' (Benson, 1901, 207, my italics). The issue in question is the second session of the Confessing Synod of the Old Prussian Union, which on 31st July 1938 gave pastors a directive to the effect that they should be free on an individual basis to take the oath of loyalty to Hitler. One aspect which has been inadequately highlighted up to now in Bonhoeffer study (apart from the significance of work to Bonhoeffer!) is that this body was Bonhoeffer's employer. So all that has been said about work and integrity now comes into play, and the new issue confronting Bonhoeffer, as someone to whom work was of central importance, was that his employer had irretrievably lost integrity and credibility, and hence this event is likely to have had the profoundest significance for him. Bethge's comments that 'Bonhoeffer was ashamed of the Confessing Church, the way one feels shame for a scandal in one's own family' and 'this was like a gash in his own flesh that would heal only with difficulty' (Bethge, 603, 602) do not do sufficient justice to this point. Bonhoeffer's long, pernickety and out-of-sorts letter to them in response (DBW 15: 50ff.) seen in the light of its true significance signals that he had reached a different place and provides in my view evidence of a sense reached within himself that he could no longer work for them. The editors of DBW 15 state (DBWE 15: 4):

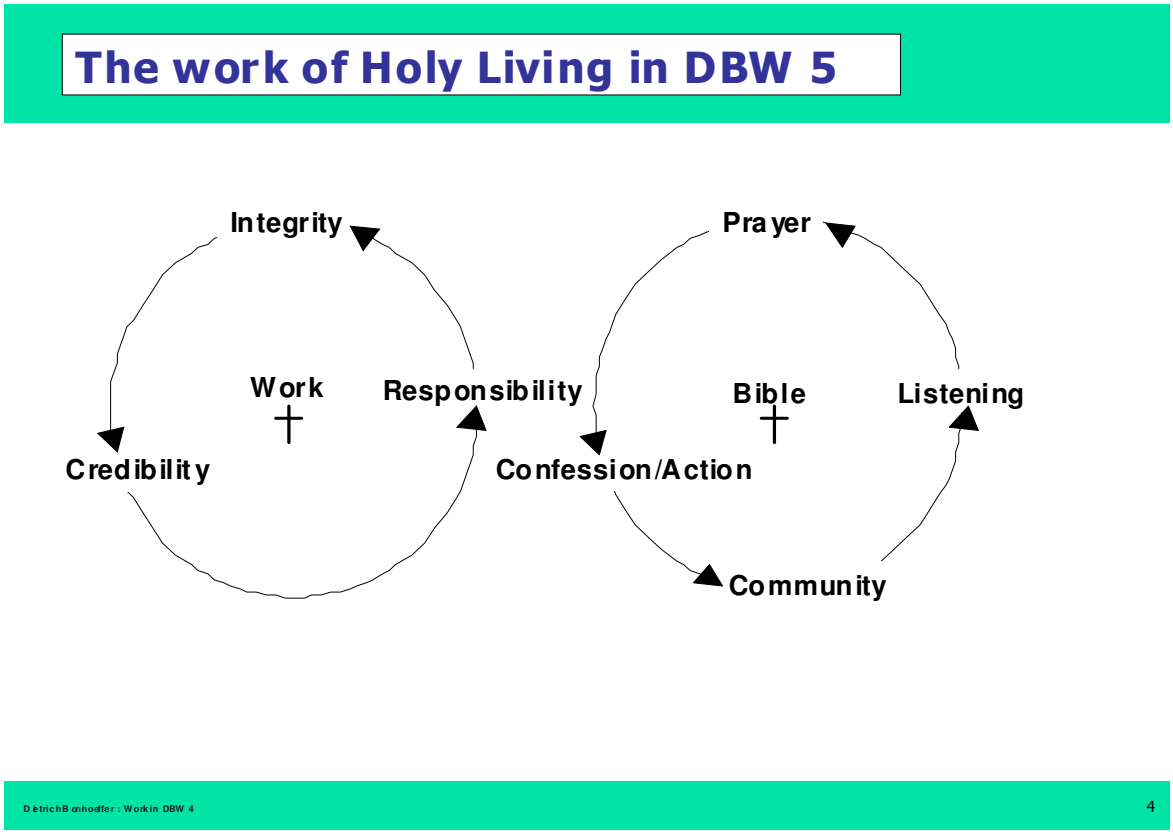
> The portrait of Bonhoeffer that emerges from this present volume shows a man focused almost exclusively on the task of mentoring his seminarians and then, as war loomed, wrestling with decisions about his own personal future.

However, the opportunity to re-visit Bonhoeffer and look at the centrality of work for him enables us to re-cast the above statement, perhaps bringing a different perspective, without diminishing its accuracy. It then becomes possible to state that Bonhoeffer until July 1938 was working wholeheartedly for the Confessing Church in a role where both personally and in his working life things came together for him as never before and he found joy and fulfilment at the deepest level. All that changed with the 31st July 1938 as he effectively (at an emotional and instinctive level) parted company with his employer at that point, perhaps because from that point on his 'deepest organ of moral discernment' recognized a chasm that could in no wise be bridged. It meant that although he was happy for the remainder of his life to accept their stipend, his own sense of work and integrity was such that a Rubicon had been crossed. It was not of his making, it was the poor decision of the Confessing Church leadership which had declared itself compromised. There was an affinity here with the struggle which had been raging since 1933: in the same way that Bonhoeffer had continued, and would still, in 1939, continue to argue stubbornly to those outside Germany that there were not two competing protestant churches in Germany, but rather, the *Reichskirche* which had taken the lead in becoming so compromised as to be heretical, and that left only the Confessing Church as a valid institution. But now that the Confessing Church had also collapsed into Hitler-obeisance, Bonhoeffer was 'out on his own' as never before. Thus the severance signalled here also flags up the re-evaluation point of a theological way of thinking about how work in the world and being church in the world related to life for Bonhoeffer. Until now, it had been possible for him to imagine himself as working for a just cause in collaboration with a body of Christians who felt the same way: the integrity was largely invested, as argued in this chapter, in the being different from the world. A life lived in holiness in conjunction with others could be a beacon of example and a sign of hope, a witness to the light amidst the darkness all around. But when the Confessing Church lost its integrity at this juncture, a new way of relating to work in the world and to life was needed. This would be an issue of central concern to him in the remaining period of his theological output. Of course, this also raises the question about Bonhoeffer's own integrity at just this point: how could he continue to accept their stipend whilst henceforward being in effective separation from them? The answer to this question should be seen in the wider context of the totality of what Bonhoeffer was from then on to do with his working life, and the cloak of secrecy which he would in future be obliged to draw around his public behaviour. It is my contention that 31st July 1938 more than any other date marks the start of a new and different way of relating to work and life for Bonhoeffer, the clear and definitive signal

(visible only to those discerning enough to be able to read the signs) of the imminent entry into the conspiracy itself, and that these factors contributed to his re-visiting of the subject of the orders and the resulting doctrine of the mandates, discussed in the next chapter. It was the start of a period when those around him began increasingly to comment that he was acting with reserve, strangely in their eyes, as if he were keeping something to himself. Certainly Bonhoeffer's deafening silence in public about the events of November 1938's *Kristallnacht* seems uncharacteristic and (otherwise) hard to fathom. Writing to Sutz at just this transitional time he appears, for example, to be in an uncertain state about work: one instance of this comes as he expresses regrets about missing a chance to have done some temporary standing in for Brunner in Princeton (DBW 15: 72). His subsequent soul-searching and travelling, first to America via England and then back again to Germany, would continue until he found a working role where once again he felt he had a new and different kind of integrity, in the *Abwehr*, in the summer of 1940. But significantly, he never took any salary from them as an employer (cf. Clements, 2006, 108), so in the direct fall-out from July1938 he had to do two things: the first, to forge his own, new, independent pathway amidst the maelstrom of events of that time: and second, to formulate for himself a new kind of 'interim' theology of work, as opposed to living and working as he had seen it hitherto, in a form that would start to find new expression from this point onwards and all the way through to the prison theology. It is my contention that this 'interim' sense of relating to remuneration and employment would prove to be of the profoundest theological significance for Bonhoeffer as he began from this point onwards to re-define the relationship between the believer and reality, seeing the incarnation of Christ in a new and fresh light. When, in a circular letter from Gross-Schlönwitz, around the turn of the year 1937, at a time when twenty-seven seminarians who had studied under him had been arrested, Bonhoeffer wrote about the impact of all the adversarial forces upon the work, it is striking to observe both how central the theme of work was to him, but also the sense of its being transient (DBW 15: 19):

> For some time now we have grown accustomed to the fact that we cannot count on having long periods of time. We neither could nor should do so. Learning obedience each new day is enough for us.

On the first point, (forging his own pathway) in the immediate aftermath of the July debacle, and facilitating the flight of his twin sister and her husband Gerhard Leibholz from Germany via Switzerland to the UK, Bonhoeffer was presented that September with an ideal opportunity to work both for himself and for the validation of the work project he had just completed: he would stay a month in the Leibholz's empty house in Göttingen and write *Life Together*. The second, his newer theological formulations, would take a little longer to emerge, and will be examined after the next section, in the final chapter.



Life Together

Bonhoeffer's short book overflows with insightful wisdom about the work of Christian brethren living together in a focussed, relational way, and communicates a sense of the deep richness of genuine Christian community. Clearly the relational practices at Finkenwalde had also been lived out at the *Bruderhaus* and the quality of formative experience had been excellent. In *Life Together* the reader is able to trace the story of a community completely committed to prayer, who begin the day with God's word and a time of singing and prayer, very much in touch with, and informed by, the rhythms and practices of monastic traditions but without a sense of stuffiness. Attentive listening and genuine humility are non-negotiable (cf. DBW 5: 82, 83). Integrity in the work of the everyday, as hitherto, is paramount (DBW 5: 84):

> One can joyfully and authentically proclaim the word of God's love and mercy with one's mouth only where one's hands are not considered too good for deeds of love and mercy in everyday helpfulness [*tägliche Hilfsbereitschaft*].

In such a community the day takes its compass and structure from the surrounding and liberating effect of being begun with prayer and meditation. But the meditation is not one which leads the believer away from reality such that they awaken with a fright on stepping out into the workaday world [*die irdische Welt der Arbeit*] but rather, a time out of which the Christian has been let into the real world of God and from which they enter into the day's activities strengthened and purified (DBW 5: 72):

> On the basis of the words of Scripture we pray that God may throw light on our day, preserve us from sin and enable us to grow in holiness, and that we may be faithful in our work and have the strength to do it.

In the light of finding this order and discipline in morning prayer, which would stand the important test at work, and asking God for strength, Bonhoeffer wrote that even routine work would be performed more patiently, with increased strength and energy, and decisions at work would become 'simpler and easier when they are not made in fear of other people, but solely before the face of God' (DBW 5: 60). The picture is further filled in by clarifying both the linkages and the distinction between prayer and work (DBW 5: 59):

> After the first morning hour, the Christian's day until evening belongs to *work*. "People go out to their work and to their labour [*Ackerwerk*] until the evening" (Ps 104:23). In most cases a community of Christians living together will separate for the duration of the working hours. Praying and working are two different things. Prayer should not be hindered by work, but neither should work be hindered by prayer. Just as it was God's will that human beings should work six days and rest and celebrate before the face of God on the seventh, so it is also God's will that every day should be marked for the Christian both by prayer and work. Prayer also requires its own time. But the longest part of the day belongs to work.The inseparable unity of both will become clear only when work and prayer each receive its own undivided due.

Given, as we have seen, the importance of both work and prayer for Bonhoeffer, it was important for him to make clear that he saw them as linked and not as in opposition to one another. In fact Bonhoeffer saw that the linkage between them was potentially liberating and uplifting. He wrote about work for all people that work was deeply wholesome because it puts human beings into the world of things [*in die Welt der Dinge*] and required achievement from them. Bonhoeffer describes the already liberating transaction for anyone involved in work which takes place between the work and the worker thus (DBW 5: 59):

> The work of the world [*das Werk in der Welt*] can only be accomplished when people forget themselves, where they lose themselves in a cause, reality, the task, the It.

For Christians, Bonhoeffer saw work as a place where the believer learned to allow the task to set the boundaries for them, and hence, because the world was for Bonhoeffer only an instrument in God's hand for the purification of Christians from all selfishness and self-absorption, he wrote that work, by being more a world of impersonal things than a world of personal encounter, had the potential to be a remedy for the lethargy and complacency of the flesh and to liberate the believer for objectivity, because 'the demands of the flesh die in the world of things'(DBW 5: 59). But this could only take place where (DBW 5: 59):

> Christians break through the It to the "You" ["*Du*"] of God, who commands the work and the deed [*die Arbeit und das Werk*] and makes them serve to liberate Christians from themselves. In this process work does not cease to be work; but the severity and rigour of work is sought all the more by those who know what good it does them. The continuing conflict with the It remains.

In the light of this potential and actual therapeutic and wholesome value of work, bounded by the constant challenge of human nature, Bonhoeffer observed that the workplace was for the *prayerful* Christian believer a place of potential breakthrough and unity. In this he asserted that if the believer began the day with God and lived the day with God it would make life and work and work and prayer come together in a joyful, liberating and productive combination, a relational encounter with the Creator Himself, which is thoroughly grounded in everyday reality (DBW 5: 59):

> The unity of prayer and work, the unity of the day, is found, because finding the You [*Du*] of God behind the It of the day's work is what Paul means by his admonition to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess 5:17). The prayer of the Christian reaches, therefore, beyond the time allocated to it and extends into the midst of the work. It surrounds the whole day, and in so doing, it does not hinder the work; it promotes work, affirms work, gives work great significance and joyfulness [*Fröhlichkeit*]. Thus every word, every deed, every piece of work of the Christian becomes a prayer, not in the unreal sense of being constantly distracted from the task that must be done, but in a real breakthrough from the hard It to the gracious You [*Du*]. 'And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus' (Col 3:17).

Seen in this way, work is affirmed, and the workplace becomes the place for action, 'the longer part of the day' (DBW 5: 59), the action of a life informed by meditation, orientated around listening and lived out in dependence upon God as provider, right in the midst of one's enemies. What is rather left unsaid is what that work is, or should be, in the light of the new transience which surrounded Bonhoeffer and those still true to the cause of the residual and fragmented Confessing Church. For Bonhoeffer, it would increasingly mean crossing over new lines in his own behaviour towards the authorities as a way of conducting his own work, and his life's work, in opposition to them. The context of the time was that the authorities in Nazi Germany increasingly repudiated the Christian faith and particularly its integral inclusion of the Old Testament. As one example of this, writing in 'Betrayal – German churches and the Holocaust', D. Bergen recounts in her essay *Storm Troopers for Christ* that already by 1936 there was a far-reaching and widespread move in this direction (Ericksen and Haschal, 1999, 56):

> The circle around Bishop Heinz Weidemann of Bremen published the first new, anti-Jewish scripture. Titled "The German Gospel of John" [*Das Evangelium Johannes Deutsch*], it appeared in 1936. Weidemann's version presented Jesus' entire mission as an onslaught against Judaism …Weidemann produced a document that presented, not a story of salvation, but a manifesto of hatred toward Jews.

In this light Bonhoeffer, already subject to a writing ban by the time war broke out, would take the decision in 1940 to publish his book on Psalm 119, *Das Gebetbuch der Bibel* under the false pretence that it was 'scientific exegesis' (DBWE 5: 143). It was a product of the same Bonhoeffer who stood in public in May 1940 giving a Nazi salute when the German army rode victorious into captured Paris so as to conceal from those around him his true intentions, his true work and his real activity. It would be an example of relating to truth, to life, and to work in an entirely new way, and a marker of a new place he inhabited, with a new relationship to work and responsibility, working as a double agent in the German resistance on the pathway to tyrannicide.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced both the development of Bonhoeffer's theology of work and his own work journey through the 1934-1938 time period. It has emerged that he increasingly saw work as responsibility, as we identified in chapter 3. Linked to that, it has also become clear that he consistently saw and responded to the need for integrity, so that a Christian believer might have credibility, and all three sections here have traced the further development of that theme, both in his theological thought and his own life journey. The chapter has identified the importance for Bonhoeffer as work of the training and formation of the illegal confessing church ordinands, a

project which culminated in his published work *Nachfolge*. The theme of the centrality of work has been strengthened in this period because this publication represented what Bonhoeffer saw his own life's work as having been about in the years leading up to its appearance. In it we have traced his challenge to the believer to stand up and be counted, not least through bringing active faith considerations into the workplace. Given that this period proved to be one in which life and work were linked for Bonhoeffer in an unprecedented way, a secondary motif has emerged and accordingly the chapter has suggested that in this period there were moments when Bonhoeffer saw life and work as a potentially unified whole. With this in view, a frequent refrain has been the pain for Bonhoeffer of observing how credibility could be undermined by a believer's need for remuneration. In this respect, the chapter has identified 31st July 1938 as a key transition moment for Bonhoeffer and has also noted a number of ways in which Bonhoeffer would begin to re-evaluate his thinking from that moment on. Because of the focus of this thesis on work, it has been argued that the decisions taken on that day had a particular impact upon Bonhoeffer which has been, until now, inadequately understood. It will be the purpose of this next and final chapter to identify how in the new context and circumstances facing him from then on Bonhoeffer would further deepen and express his thinking in relation to work, both in what he wrote and how he lived.

Chapter 7: *Beruf ist Verantwortung*

A central thrust of this thesis has been to argue that work was for Bonhoeffer more important than has hitherto been acknowledged, in the context he encountered, and that as a part of that, his own theological writing on, and engagement with, the subject of work has until now been relatively neglected. Accordingly this chapter will continue to trace diachronically the thread of work thought through Bonhoeffer's life and context and will argue that a primary motif for Bonhoeffer during the period 1939 -1943 was that of work, and that the mandates, where Bonhoeffer explores more fully than elsewhere a theology of work, leave us in the end with a legacy of hope, owing in part to the fact of their composition under circumstances of such duress, but also to the fact that together they would provide a hope-filled basis for the actions of the conspiracy, which Bonhoeffer interpreted as work. The chapter will also include a brief reflection on some potential contemporary applications of 'mandates thinking' as well as some thoughts on how Bonhoeffer's theology is significant today. Having dallied in 1939 for some while with the idea of spending the war in America, to the extent that he travelled there, Bonhoeffer returned to Germany with a sense of purpose, writing in New York in his diary on June 6th (DBW 15: 232): 'It's completely clear to me that I must go back to work'. What that work would involve will form the subject matter of this chapter, which will discuss Bonhoeffer's concept of the mandates, with the mandate of work at the heart of this thinking. The preceding chapters have established what was in Bonhoeffer's mind in earlier periods in his life in relation to work and what will emerge in this chapter will be the extent to which, during the period in question, he formed a more mature judgement on a number of those issues. In the fullest example of this, this chapter will argue that Bonhoeffer saw it as his work freely to choose involvement in re-aligning of the mandates towards Christ, which in his case meant a calling to the guilt of tyrannicide in obedient response to God's command. For Bonhoeffer, returning from America meant a return to join the 'world within the world' workplace of the conspiracy and in the end to forfeit his life in service of that cause. In committing his life to this work as his own response to the call to live responsibly, it would, for example, add a whole new dimension to how Bonhoeffer had felt earlier in the Finkenwalde period when he had first written the passage about Luther's return from the monastery to the world (DBW 6: 291):

> Luther's return from the monastery to the world, to the 'calling', is in the true NT sense the fiercest attack and assault to be launched against the world since primitive Christianity. Now a stand against the world is taken within the world: the chosen workplace is the place at which one answers the call of Christ and thus lives responsibly.The task given to me by

my calling is thus limited: but my responsibility to the call of Jesus Christ knows no bounds.

What Bonhoeffer had then drawn from Luther was a sense of the vital urgency of the workplace in living responsibly: what he would be drawn in to in this next phase of his obedience to the divine command would cost his own life. In order to advance the argument that work as a whole, and particularly responsible work, was central to Bonhoeffer's thinking, this chapter will progress by examining Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates, which include the mandate of work.

Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates: an introduction

Much detailed work has been done in recent years on the subject of the chronology of the various fragments of writing, dated (insofar as it has been possible to estimate dates) between Spring 1941 and mid 1943, which have come down to us. An analysis of the relevant sections pertaining to the mandates is hence possible and in summary form shows us something of the nature of Bonhoeffer's *in via* approach to the theme:

Mandates Text No. & DBWE Estimated Phase/Ref	**1 DBWE 16 pp 503-528 Spring 1941**	**2 DBWE 6 pp 68-75 Ethics Phase 1 & 2**	**3 DBWE 6 pp 296-298 Ethics phase 3 (ends Aug 1942)**	**4 DBWE 16 pp 540-551 Summer 1942**	**5 DBWE 6 pp 363-387 Ethics phase 5 (1943)**	**6 DBWE 6 pp 388-408 Ethics phase 5**
Title	State and Church - Governments and the divine orders in the world	Christ, Reality and Good (of which Mandates section is a later insertion)	History and Good (2)	'Personal' and 'Objective' Ethics	The 'Ethical' and the Christian' as a topic	The Concrete Commandment and the Divine Mandates
Order in which the Mandates (Orders) are mentioned/ alluded to	Marriage, work and government	Work, marriage, government, and church	Marriage, work, and Government	Marriage and family, work, government, church	Church, family, work, and government Church, marriage, family, work and state	Church, marriage and family, culture and government
Bonhoeffer/ Germany key events	24.2.41 Trip to Switzerland /Karl Barth 29.8.41 Trip to Switzerland/ Karl Barth	15.9.41 Jews required to wear Yellow star 16.10.41 First mass deportation of Jews begin	June 2.42 Meets Maria 22.8.& 26.10.42 Maria's father / brother killed	24.11.42 Asks for Maria's hand in marriage December 1942 *'Nach 10 Jahren'*	13.3.43 and 21.3.43 Tyrannicide attempts	5.4.1943 arrested

From this analysis, ordered according to the dating of the sections with references to the mandates, sourced from DBWE 6, it may be clearly discerned that the formulation of the mandates doctrine had a certain fluidity. We see here that Bonhoeffer puts forward four mandates (Government, marriage, church and work), and that the mandate of 'work' is re-classified as 'culture' or 'culture' (work) before in a subsequent text being described once again as work on 23.1.44 (DBW 8: 290).

The vagueness may well be in some measure intentional on Bonhoeffer's part, given the level of surveillance he was experiencing.[33] When actually in this same 1944 letter from within prison he suggested that the sphere of freedom actually surrounds all three (sic) mandates and it may equally be that the level of questioning he was experiencing (despite the easing off which happened in early 1944, thanks to Canaris' good work in the background, cf. Hoffmann, 1977, 294) may again have been contributing to an intentional ambiguity. Perhaps even more so than for Luther, there was a need for Bonhoeffer to be careful about his choice of phraseology. It was for him an immediate concern, as during this period in question he was experiencing an acceleration in the tempo of the tightening of constrictions upon him at the hands of the regime he was resisting.[34] In the increased severity of this immediate context it would have been foolish to write anything which, in the expectation of regular house searches by the Gestapo, could easily be construed as 'public incitement' or anything demonstrating 'hostility towards the state', so it was mainly necessary for him to couch expressions of thinking in such language as to be not only defensible before (or impenetrable to) a potential Gestapo interrogator, but also sufficiently open to interpretation such that Bonhoeffer's actual hostility to the state could in fact be convincingly argued as loyalty.[35]

Perhaps it is fair to say that in the same way that the editors write in the preface that we are directly indebted to the Gestapo for the publication of DBW5, so too here it is the work context of careful encoding in the shadow of ongoing Gestapo interference which has resulted in what we have of Bonhoeffer's concept of the mandates. However, it is helpful also to be reminded that Bonhoeffer had a fondness for conceptual thinking and that his theological thought was in a process of constant development. In 1936, for his courses at Finkenwalde, his point of departure had been: how is the realm of church to be defined (itself) with respect to the other realms? These realms were: 1.) The realm of proclamation and confessional witness. 2.) The realm of the office, the offices and the gifts. 3.) The realm of the Christian life and commands (new life, Discipleship) 4.) (Planned) Boundaries of the realm of church vs. the realm of the state, vs. *legis naturae*, vs. realm of the kingdom of God. In practice 4.) had become 'Church-community upbuilding, nurture

[33] Both Green and Lovin would endorse this.
[34] The editors' afterword to DBW 6: 424/5 refers.
[35] On this important point Bonhoeffer's double life depended, and upon this point his incarceration was triggered. This is because although his superior (Canaris) was enduringly able under interrogation to outwit his interrogators and frame all his covert activities as being sleight of hand in order to expose loyalty (or otherwise) to the regime, (cf. Bassett, 2005, and Hoffmann, 1977, 513 and 530) it was a momentary loss of poise on the subject of what was public and what was not in a communication between Oster and Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law Dohnanyi which confirmed the regime's suspicions about the *Abwehr* department in general and the latter two in particular (Hoffmann, 1977, 293). This happened whilst their office was being raided by the Gestapo. Lovin (1984, 130) makes an allusion to this issue, in a rather understated way: 'Bonhoeffer's thoughts are sometimes not fully developed, nor are they always clear. The obscurity is perhaps deliberate. A man who seeks to overthrow his own government in wartime can hardly go about with a theological notebook on the subject'.

and discipline in the New Testament' (cf. DBW 14: 1003-6). Such were the thoughts of those days. But since the closure of the seminary a lot had happened: Bonhoeffer had travelled to America and back, Poland had been invaded, the allies had declared hostilities in response, and seminarians were quick to be drafted in overwhelming numbers to the front line of what Bonhoeffer viewed as an unjust war (Bethge, 2000, 691). So the 'realm' discussions about the state had if possible further exploded in importance, such that in one sense this area effectively dwarfed all others by comparison. So how would Bonhoeffer approach this challenge?

One way in which Bonhoeffer would come at the presenting challenge proved to be in re-visiting his earlier thinking about order in conjunction with Brunner. In the early new year of 1940 (during the period which came to be known at least in the United Kingdom as the 'phoney' war) Bonhoeffer was working in Sigurdshof during a prolonged interval of bitterly cold weather and snowy conditions. He found the solitude exhilarating and it inspired his work (DBW 15: 292). Amidst the chaos of war and constant relocations he had only a limited number of texts which he could carry around with him, but clearly one text which did make that short list was Brunner's *The Divine Imperative*. This is apparent because in a highly significant letter to his twin sister Sabine and her husband Gerhard Leibholz dated March 7th 1940 (a letter which Bonhoeffer refers to as a 'boring theological' composition, written at a time when he did not expect to be snowbound for too much longer) he twice refers directly to Brunner's book in positive terms (DBW 15: 301 and 302 'I continue to think that Brunner says wise things' and 'Brunner explains very well'). He also refers indirectly to Brunner's thought as published in *The Divine Imperative* further into the letter, as well as mentioning a phrase used by Brunner, *Suum cuique,* which he later adopts as a chapter sub-heading in Ethics. Given Bonhoeffer's initial disappointment on first reading the publication, referred to in Chapter 4 of this thesis, this is worthy of note. Furthermore, Victoria Barnett has drawn attention (in a footnote, DBWE 15:301) to the fact that a comment in this same letter anticipates Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates, as Bonhoeffer wrote (DBWE 15: 301):

> A distinction must be drawn between the law within the creation and that within the redemption. To the first belongs the *jus naturale, lex naturae* (Tröltsch). Are there principles of law in the creation that could be viewed as absolutely valid? Or is law bound to actual power? The doctrine of *lex naturae*, which underlies Catholicism, presupposes several legal entities sui generis (family, economy etc…) which all have one source, the Creator of the world.

This is a far-reaching comment which points forward both to a central thesis of Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*, the impact and implications of a single unified reality in Christ, whether human beings acknowledge Christ or not, as well as to his formulation of the mandates doctrine, and to Bonhoeffer's intuitive openness to Catholic moral theology. As a further and related point, the

strong likelihood that in February 1940 Bonhoeffer had Brunner's book with him in Sigurdshof is significant in connection with the mandates partly also because, according to the dating agreed by the contributors to the new edition of *Ethics*, the first mandates text (published as DBWE 16: 503-528) *State and Church: Governments and the Divine orders in the world* is formulated around the Spring of 1941, during which time, according to the editors of DBW 16 'Bonhoeffer clearly had Brunner's book before him as he was writing this text' (DBWE 16: 504).[36] Given the physical size of the Brunner volume, and Bonhoeffer's movements during the time period in question, which is decisive for the shape of *Ethics* and the mandates doctrine, it would seem appropriate to suggest in the light of the available evidence here, (i.e. of Bonhoeffer's active use of *The Divine Imperative* both in March 1940 and Spring 1941) that Bonhoffer drew still more closely on Brunner than has been acknowledged hitherto, even more so than, for example, the close proximity of direction of travel in theological thought convincingly argued by Lovin in *Christian Faith and Public Choices*.[37]

Reflecting on work and order: certainly not a self-indulgent luxury

Another way in which Bonhoeffer would develop his response to thought about realms in the light of the outbreak of war would be to face the need for a radical overhaul as he found himself writing to front line soldiers, drafted often with great reluctance, and what that meant theologically, particularly as he continued to develop his thoughts about work. For example, although Bonhoeffer had always seen freedom as a central strand of all Christian life and thought, and at a time when conscientious objection for an individual meant death and shame, and call-up meant taking a loyalty oath to Hitler, and participation in war, correspondence from and circular letters to former ordinands were not easy to receive or write (DBW 16: 29-32). For many of those ordinands the workplace of the front line was akin to a place of slavery. As the authorities further attacked his own work and livelihood and closed down his opportunity for work even in the collective pastorates, the time came in May 1940, when Bonhoeffer felt that a chapter in his own work had closed (DBW 16: 35): 'My work has always absorbed me and made me happy and now that it is over I am particularly thankful for that too'. At just this time he would ask (DBW 16: 488): 'of what use is the word of the church any more?' and reflected in a moment of disarming honesty that theology was regarded as a 'completely useless activity' (DBW 16: 493). But amidst this *tristitia* his new work, as a theologian and active member of the resistance, in which he would come to find hope, was just taking shape. As the year progressed Bonhoeffer continued to grapple

[36] The first chapter of *Ethics,* which clearly articulates the thesis originally alluded to (and cited) above, is believed to have been written in September 1940.
[37] There is insufficient space here further to explore this suggestion but it is hoped that making selective apposite references as the chapter develops will be helpful.

intensively with this dominant theme, the role of the state, and what, under these circumstances, the concept of order and work could mean. This can be clearly discerned, for example, from an SS report dated 13.7.1940 on a retreat led by Bonhoeffer at Gut Bloestau, written by an agent who had infiltrated Bonhoeffer's circle of students, despite the fact that it is written up by an impostor, in halting language. Here we see that Bonhoeffer, living dangerously, was spending his time teaching students from the rump of the Confessing Church about how Christians relate to government, order and work by means of a powerful work/injustice hermeneutic (DBW 16: 52):

> Following the coffee hour, the interpretation of the Bible passage, Matthew 19 v.16 (Mark 10) was undertaken (the story of the Rich Young Man) and the following conclusions were reached … At the moment, two orders among the people face each other on the one side, the State's demand toward exerting all energies to secure life for the people, and on the other side the ordering of the Christian community to submit to the command of Christ alone. If the state continues to force each individual to work on its own behalf, it thereby prevents the individual person who believes in God from achieving the highest insight of the Christian path. Currently work is a necessity. This means that the state has made a necessity into a virtue by setting up work as the most important consideration at present.

Such reflections and teaching on work were not a self-indulgent luxury, but matters of life and death, as, for example, when the state would order doctors to carry out euthanasia killings, and order soldiers to commit war crimes. From his earliest days Bonhoeffer had been very concerned to articulate the form in which the Church's responsibility for life in the world should be structured. So it can be readily understood how it was when Bonhoeffer first began to formulate his mandates texts, that the subject matter was important and urgent.

Ettal

To address the topic of order and work, Bonhoeffer needed space to write, and he was fortunate to spend much of the winter of 1940-1941 at the Ettal Monastery in the vicinity of Munich: he stayed between November 17th and February 1941, during which time notification of his *uk* status (indispensable to war effort) arrived, with a correspondence trail providing intermittent clues as to which mandate he was working on. At this time Bonhoeffer was also concurrently working on the project of resistance, and, in this respect, Ettal was significant for resistance work for two further reasons. First, the frequency with which Dohnanyi and his family also stayed there is remarkable (recorded in DBW 16: 679-682, and explained in part by the close proximity at a boarding school of the Dohnanyi children, (Sifton, 2013, 82)) and second, because around Christmas 1940 Rupert Mayer, the Catholic priest interned for much of the Nazi period in a

concentration camp for his active resistance to the authorities, who died very shortly after the war and who has been much honoured by subsequent historians, is documented as having met there with Bonhoeffer and Bethge (DBW 16: 680).

Mandates: a doctrine of hope

Bonhoeffer opts to work with the imperfect term 'mandates' in preference to orders of creation or orders of preservation, and his new term by moving away from the word 'orders' suggests *per se* more openness (cf. Dumas on p.21of this thesis). The term 'mandates' conveys the point that human responsibilities for work, marriage, government and church are tasks given by God, not merely functional requirements of society or patterns set for us by nature. In *Sanctorum Communio*, Bonhoeffer had outlined his thinking about the role of church in human society and had written about the church's collective personality. In advancing the doctrine of the mandates, Bonhoeffer describes several spheres of activity in which he sees Christ relating to the world. In this, the church still has distinctive features: for example, the church still proclaims the word of God: to use ideas found elsewhere in the *Ethik*, this proclamation is an 'ultimate' task undertaken in the 'penultimate' of the 'here and now'. In this sense the role of the mandates can be seen as that of preparing the way for the presence of Christ in the world. For Bonhoeffer, a 'mandate' can thus be said to refer to: the divine commission (grounded in the revelation of Christ and, notably, of the Bible); the authority to declare a particular divine command; and the proleptic commandeering of an earthly domain by the divine command. For Bonhoeffer, with his emphasis on vicarious responsible action [*Stellvertretung*], the choice of the term 'mandate' is apposite because the bearer of the mandate acts as a stand-in for the one who issued the divine commandment. Ostensibly they represent a theologian's interpretation of how the West has developed to the point at which the author found himself at the time of writing, as well as an expression of how Christian believers are to live and work responsibly both now and in a different future within the structures of society. But given the context of despair and destruction of life in which Bonhoeffer was able to formulate them, it is arguable that because by their very appearance they express resistance and theological thought about a better order, their enduring legacy is more to be found in their expression and orientation of theological hope. There are numerous reasons why this is the case. One reason is Bonhoeffer's sense that they contain a 'divine promise' (DBW 16: 561). Another is the sense (mentioned above) in which the mandates can be seen as preparing the way for the presence of Christ in the world. Still another is to be found in what the mandates assume, or take for granted, as they form an essential component of a wider treatise, largely, but not exclusively, articulated in Bonhoeffer's *Ethics*. For these elements a helpful initial heading is: 'given' hope.

7.1 '*Given'hope: what the doctrine of the mandates assumes*

Bonhoeffer's Christology was brought to fruitful expression in his lectures of 1932, and continues to find, if possible, even fuller voice in the *Ethics*. What 'Jesus Christ is Lord' means to Bonhoeffer is that from this centre and no other he understands the relation of God and the world. It is from God's becoming human in Jesus Christ that we 'live and move and have our being,' and in which our true purpose and humanity is located. In Christ as redeemer humanity is accepted by, and reconciled to, God, so that in and through the cross Jesus' dominion over all creation is reclaimed and the death towards which we move is defeated (DBWE 16: 516):

> Thus precisely through the cross Jesus reclaimed his dominion over government (Col 2:15) and at the end of all things 'every ruler, government and power' will be 'sublated' (in a double sense) through him.

The *Ethics* manuscripts are replete with meditations on the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, faith in whom is (DBWE 6: 75) 'the single source of all good'. In Bonhoeffer's Christology there is one single reality, both for the believer and the unbeliever as (DBWE 6: 75): 'the will of God, as it was revealed and fulfilled in Jesus Christ, embraces the whole of reality,' and because of this unity and wholeness, there is in Bonhoeffer's writings what Green refers to as a 'running polemic' (DBWE 6: 9) against all forms of inappropriate separate thinking, partitioning and disintegration. (DBWE 6: 388): 'The commandment of God in Jesus Christ embraces in its unity all of human life. Its claim on human beings and the world through the reconciling love of God is all-encompassing'. In Bonhoeffer's theological understanding, closed-off and life-denying thought patterns are anathema. The mandates are a sphere of life 'kept open' for Christ. With this understanding (only) as a given, Bonhoeffer introduces the idea of the mandates as divine mandates in the midst of the world, divine only because they find their origin, existence and goal 'given' (DBWE 6: 56) in Jesus Christ. It flows from this that because all things exist for Christ and on the strength of Christ, they therefore stand under the commandment and claim of Christ, including the worldly orders, whether they recognise Christ's dominion or not. It follows from this that the Church-community stands in a place of responsibility for the world as a whole which God has loved. This responsibility cannot be shed even in times of intense persecution by those very worldly orders to whom Christ's Lordship is proclaimed (DBW 6: 556): 'even in the catacombs the church is never relieved of the universality of its mission'. But worldly orders which give space to the church of Jesus Christ to exist and to proclaim Christ's dominion find that rather than being asked for the conversion of the statesman or businessman, they are by contrast set free for genuine worldliness (DBWE 16: 546 et passim). Bonhoeffer would have

concurred with the observation that Brunner's Christian engineers build 'solid bridges, not Christian ones'.

7.2 *'Given' hope: but are we any use?*

Alongside Bonhoeffer's Christology the mandates, by virtue of helping to understand the present, and looking towards the future, provide a partial answer to the question of usefulness which is central to maintaining a hope-filled stance. By 1941 his main work in the *Abwehr* was centred around the plans for the coup d'état and the removal of Hitler. But so much else had not been done and in relation to the subject of being useful in the work towards restoring order in a situation of chaos, it was easy to feel powerless, that so little had been, and perhaps could be, achieved, that the question as to the usefulness of everything the resistors were trying to accomplish was an ever-present one. In his well-known reckoning at Christmas 1942 in the essay "Nach Zehn Jahren" he would reflect self-critically about usefulness in ten years of resistance, a period in which he and those like him had been silent witnesses of evil deeds, and this was a moment when he forcefully asked of himself and his fellow resistors (DBW 8: 38) 'Are we of any use?' By complete contrast, the regime that Bonhoeffer was resisting took a more cynical view of usefulness, particularly when it came to work, and the sharpness of that contrast is helpful in offering a perspective on Bonhoeffer's searching question.

In April 1942, at a time when the corruption of work itself was at its height in Nazi Germany, the *Volkswagen* company, under famous entrepreneur Ferdinand Porsche (sic) established a concentration camp with the revealing name of *Arbeitsdorf* (Gellately, 2001, 216). By mid 1942, the work of Auschwitz was ramping up towards its eventual peak activity of the murder of 20,000 people a day,[38] a process which the inner circle of the Third Reich chose to refer to (in just another instance of their extensive vocabulary of euphemisms) as '*Verarbeitung'* [processing] (derived from the German word for work) (Meyer, 1993, 27). This language was utilised in the conscious awareness that such nomenclature did indeed play a role in adding a certain layer of apparent legitimacy to the project, producing for those involved echoes suggesting that what they were involved in had more resemblance to legitimate work. But the truth is, the Auschwitz perpetrators more or less all chose to frame their activities as work, work that was necessary, which had a purpose, and work that had a value, and a usefulness.[39] Such thinking was indeed rendered more possible if one was fundamentally led astray by the allure of the then-current racist thinking in which a person designated as Jewish was in fact akin to or indeed none other than a parasite or cancerous growth endangering the bodily health and future well-being of the true German *Volk*.

[38] Klemperer noted in his diary on 17th October 1942 'Auschwitz appears to be a swift-working slaughter-house' (2000, 189).
[39] Lifton, 2010, chs 1, 5 and 15 especially.

But co-existing alongside the '*Arbeitslager'*[work camp] and *Vernichtungslager* [annihilation camp] dehumanisation of people and work and its pseudo-Nietzschean reversal and rejection of Christian values of *caritas*, compassion and mercy,[40] there hovered, around the theme of usefulness, a sinister strand of work-related utilitarianism, a kind of work-and productivity-based temporary mercy, a cynical and mercantile staying of the hand of death. Primo Levi's moving account of one such interchange is cited by Jonathan Sacks (2011,121):

> To survive at Auschwitz, Primo Levi had to pass a test qualifying him, as a scientist, to work at a nearby chemical factory. The examination was conducted by a Doctor Engineer Pannewitz. This is how Levi describes it:
> Pannewitz is tall and blond, with the kind of hair and eyes and nose that every German is supposed to have. He is seated menacingly behind an elaborate desk. And I, *Häftling* 174517, I stand in his office, which is a real office, neat and clean, with everything in order, feeling as if I would soil anything I touched. When he finished writing, he raised his eyes and looked at me.
> Since that day, I have thought about *Doktor* Pannewitz many times and in different ways. I have often wondered about the inner workings of this man. What did he do with his time when he was not producing polymers in a chemistry lab, when he let his imagination wander beyond the reaches of his Germanic consciousness? Above all, I wanted to meet him again, now that I was free, not out of revenge, but to satisfy my curiosity about the human soul. Because the look he gave me was not the way one man looks at another. If I could fully explain the nature of that look - it was as if through the glass of an aquarium, directed at some creature belonging to a different world – I would be able to explain the great madness of the Third Reich, down to its very core. Everything we thought and said about the Germans took shape in that one moment. The brain commanding those blue eyes and manicured hands clearly said 'This thing standing before me clearly belongs to a species that must be eliminated. But with this particular example, it is worth making sure that he has nothing we can use before we can get rid of him'.

In such a way did the co-workers of the extermination camps ensure they would make it their business to extract *useful value* from others in the realm of work prior to dispensing with them. In this light Bonhoeffer's desire to be useful in resistance can only be seen as laudable. But the circumstances he was facing weighed heavily on his desire to be productive whilst maintaining his integrity, and he wrote to Bethge along these lines, and raising the related issue of self-love (to which he would later return) a year into the war (DBW 16: 65):

[40] Lifton, 2010, 32 refers.

> you are presently leading a much more eventful and more productive life for the general cause, than I am: only you must not let yourself be consumed and must preserve your own integrity as much as possible. I believe that a great deal of the exhaustion and sterility in our ranks is rooted in the lack of 'selfless self-love' (Pieper). Since this topic has no place in the official Protestant ethics, we arrogantly discard it and become work-obsessed, to the detriment of the individual and of the whole. It belongs, however, to that humanism for which we are redeemed.

Thus in formulating the doctrine of the mandates, Bonhoeffer assumed the hope-facing approach, in the face of intense and potentially overwhelming challenges, that making a Christian stand could be useful. Moreover, it is pertinent that the doctrine of the mandates always includes marriage, and that Bonhoeffer from this time on (mid 1942) had an even more lively interest in thinking ahead to beyond the war, particularly when it came to marriage. After he had asked Maria to marry him he consistently maintained an order of describing the mandates which placed church ahead of marriage in the word order, which may represent a sign of an additional determination to honour suitably the work he was engaged in.

Also constitutive of the 'given hope' of the mandates are three further foundational elements: first, the centrality of the Bible. Bonhoeffer specifically asserts that the mandates are a biblically based doctrine, and the centrality of the Bible for Bonhoeffer is amply documented in particular in chapter 5 of this thesis: (DBWE 6: 54, et passim), which needs no further articulation here. Second, the mandates assume that freedom is, with work and thought, a 'natural right' (DBW 16:147). Bonhoeffer[41] saw freedom less as the secular type of freedom characterised by declarations of human rights (freedom 'from') but rather more as a freedom rooted in God's aseity, and as such a 'freedom for' God's will and a freedom for others. For Bonhoeffer, freedom and responsibility are linked concepts. It is a freedom inextricably linked to hearing God's command in obedience, and in putting forward the doctrine of the mandates Bonhoeffer sees freedom and obedience as co-existing, like the mandates, fruitfully in an above/below relationship but also alongside one another. Bonhoeffer writes (DBWE 6: 378):

> The commandment of God … encompasses all of life. It is not only unconditional, it is also total. It not only prohibits and commands, but also gives permission. It not only binds but also sets us free – in fact, it does so precisely by binding.

[41] As mentioned in my introductory chapter: cf. also Nickson, A. (2002) *Bonhoeffer on Freedom.*

But, because the will of God cannot be summed up under any principle, it is not at our disposal: rather, so far as we are concerned, the will of God is absolutely free, and the Christian believer is thus a free lord over all things because he or she stands 'directly under the personal orders of the free sovereign God' (Brunner, 1937, 83). A violation of this freedom (such as a government forcing people to perform work against their will) Bonhoeffer sees as analogous with rape which is the destruction of an individual's bodily freedom. He writes (DBW 6: 214ff. trans. altered):

> This condition (slavery) exists wherever a person has become a thing under the power of another and is only a means to another person's ends. There is always a danger of this when people do not have freedom to choose their place of work, when they cannot exchange their place of work for another, or when they cannot control the amount of work they are to undertake. Then the bodily strength of the worker is used without restriction: at best this utilization is limited by the need to conserve the person's usefulness as a worker, but sometimes, for certain reasons, even this limit is not respected, leading to complete exhaustion. People are robbed of their bodily strength; their bodies become completely the object of exploitation by those who are stronger. The freedom of the human body is destroyed. More about this is found in the chapter on 'Work'[42] (Editors' note: a chapter about 'work' does not exist).

It should be noted how poignant it is that just as Bonhoeffer starts to 'get going' more fully on the subject of work and the freedom of the human body, promising to develop this line of thought specifically, that his further writing at this point was either not done or has been lost. But Bonhoeffer continues to think creatively about freedom. Together with his thinking on the mandates, it remains unfinished, but also 'un-wrestled with' (using the motif of Genesis 32:24 as a definition of what it means to think theologically) and in his last-written mention of the subject (in the letter of 23.1.44) he refers to friendship and freedom as separate realms, as alluded to above.

7.3 *Above and below: restoring order where chaos reigns*

Third, the mandates assume that there is a given sense of 'above and below' to the way God intends that society should work, in a theological, as opposed to a sociological, understanding, which is a concrete help in allowing us to live with what would otherwise be a multiplicity of conflicting obligations. Hence the construct of the mandates enables both an understanding of the present question 'How did we get into this chaos?' and a forward looking set of questions 'How and on what basis should we get out of it?', and in terms of the theological impulse, Bonhoeffer's

[42] This sentence is a footnote in the original text.

emphasis is on the latter. For many today the demands of family often compete with the demands of work. The Confessing Church in its own time knew very well how the demands of one type of government will compete with the claims of the church. An era forgetful of Christ would seek to eliminate the complexity and over-prioritise one mandate versus the others. The totalitarian state represents this solution, but in similar vein so does what Karl Barth calls 'captivity to the clan' (Lovin, 119) and so too does an excessive devotion to the church which ignores the other ways in which Christ takes form in the world. The point is that if each mandate is understood in a dynamic way, not as an autonomous realm but in its interaction with, and for, and in its encounter with each other mandate, only then can life be hallowed and ordered aright: but when one mandate gains excessive space to the detriment of others, the consequences can be devastating. The mandate of work assumes that rest exists alongside work in collaboration with the mandates of governments and Church which support that mandate. But Bonhoeffer saw violation around him, a wrong living in relation to the mandate of work, a mandate which is defined by its counterpart, rest. In Bonhoeffer's view rest has not only the purpose of increasing work productivity but also it provides the body with its due measure of repose and enjoyment, and equally, play is by its very nature remote from all subordination to purpose, and it thus demonstrates most clearly that the life of the body is an end in itself. Bonhoeffer saw that the Church had failed to stand up and protect the day of rest (DBW 6:129, trans. altered):

> The Church confesses herself guilty of the loss of the Sabbath day, of the withering away of her public worship and of the contemptuous neglect of Sunday as a day of rest. She has incurred the guilt of restlessness and disquiet and also the exploitation of work even beyond the working weekday, because her preaching of Jesus Christ has been feeble and her public worship has been lifeless.

An attentive discernment of God's command is required. In one sense the mandates may be seen as a heuristic in the complexity of the everyday for the seeking out of the theologically important, just in order to stimulate prayerful insight as to the way forward, and in this, the above/below 'given' is essential. What the commandment establishes in each of the mandates is more akin to a chain of command than to a natural order (DBWE 6: 383):

> This means that the commandment of God does not arise out of the created world, but rather comes from above to below. It does not result from the actual claim made on human beings by earthly powers and laws, such as the instinct for self-preservation, hunger, sexuality, or political power, but instead stands beyond them, demanding and judging. The commandment of God institutes an irrevocable above and below on earth, independent of the actual relationship of these powers.

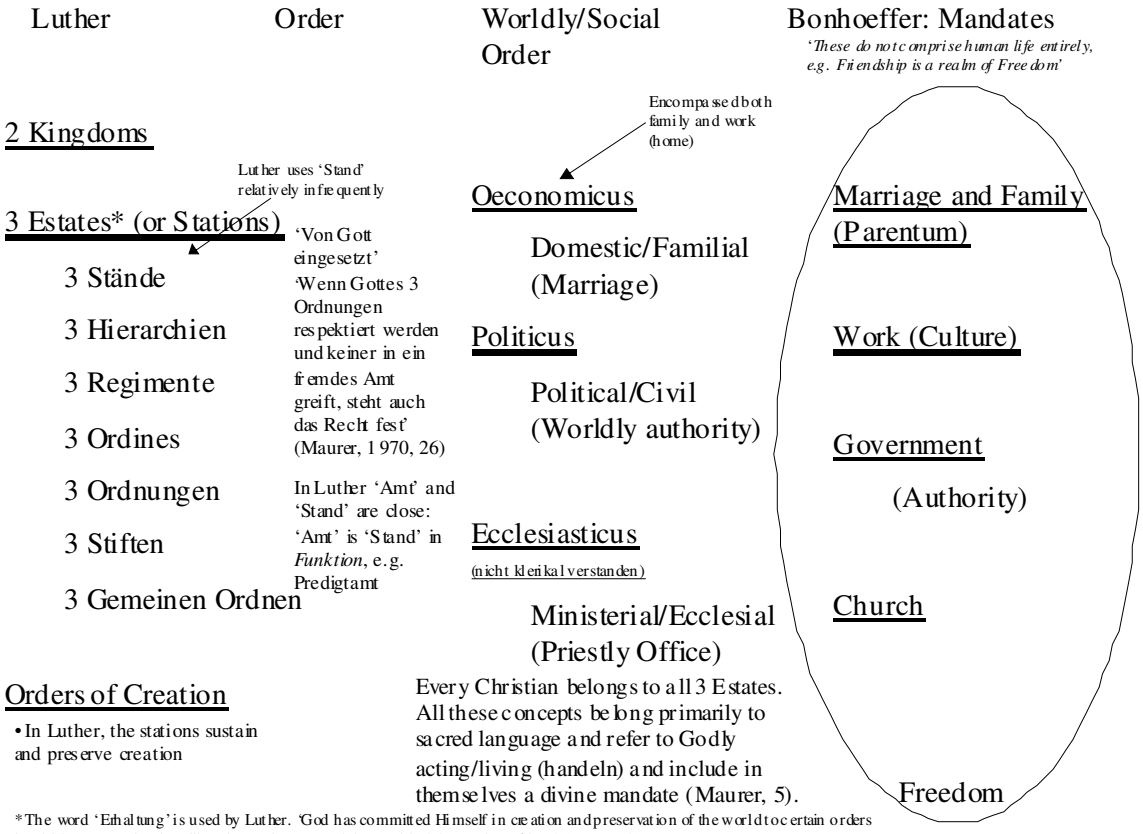
In these words we observe Bonhoeffer attempting, with only limited success, to recover a positive account of the natural (and *mutatis mutandis*, of work) in Protestant theology. Bonhoeffer acknowledges the contribution of Catholic teaching in valuing the natural order and in giving concrete moral guidance to ordinary believers, although he sees that this is not quite 'worked out'. For Bonhoeffer, complete conceptual coherence is not the order of the day. What Bonhoeffer sees as appealing within this is the natural law sense that humankind is pre-programmed to do the right thing.[43] In Protestant thinking the law is a tutor, designed to direct all people to Christ, as the law makes quite clear to one and all the need for grace. The limited success is that what he describes here results in the end in leaving too many questions open. For example, in the process of the above/below being instituted, one may well ask, how is the charge of allowing in at the same time a trace of North German patriarchalism to be refuted? In a further instance of leaving things open, it is for some an omission in the concept as a whole that in the discussion of the mandates, no attempt is made to discuss the topic of industrial relations. The contrast, for example, with the Kreisau Circle, where, in the light of Catholic Social Teaching, there is a good deal of thinking taking place around Trades Unions and the like, is unfavourable.[44] In this above/below ordering, in a world where there are too many words, the authorization for ethical discourse – for example, within the mandate of work – is with the master of his or her apprentice. But as we saw in the previous chapter, sustained integrity in this authorization is vital (DBWE 6: 375): 'the authorization for ethical discourse proves itself in loyalty, trustworthiness, duration and repetition'. The warrant for such authorization does not depend on the skill or the success of the one who holds it, as it applies to offices [*Ämte*] and not to people who occupy them, so no-one can claim the role of an all-powerful leader, as the warrant for that discourse does not exist.[45] Thus in terms of the importance of 'above and below' it may be said that (at least in theory) characteristic of the divine mandates is an orderly, as opposed to an arbitrary or chaotic, division of authority among the different mandates themselves and proper relations of 'above and below' within each of them. It follows on from this that being a responsible contributor within God's world means assuming the level of co-worker status in the project of bringing order out of chaos as God in Christ did in the original creation. The legitimacy for, and basis of, the mandates resides only in their orientation towards Christ and reaching their goal in Him: in other words, in conscious or unconscious subjection to the divine task. Work, for example, or marriage is not divine in and of itself, but only in Christ. In this respect Bonhoeffer reveals a deep continuity with the psalmists in which context the Law is a heuristic; the mandates point the way towards the discovery of obedience. But when

[43] Aquinas wrote that 'to sin is nothing else but to hang back from the good that belongs to one by nature' (ST 1/11 109 2 ad. 2 cit. Pieper, 2011, 37).
[44] Cf. Fest, 1996, 100-104.
[45] Of course, a critique of the Third Reich is implied here.

any mandate is persistently and arbitrarily violated its divine character is extinguished, and in relation to the government of Germany, it was clear to Bonhoeffer that this was indeed already the case. This point will be further addressed in the section after next and whether the concept of mandates 'succeeds' at this point will remain open to interpretation. The structuring of society in terms of the responsibility of the higher for the lower is puzzling, and perhaps not the only way it could be done. It is understandable in terms of the relationship between parents and children but hardly so in marriage. Even in Bonhoeffer's own sphere of friendship, Renate and Eberhard Bethge recognised at the time that his above/below view in this respect was unhelpful.

7.4 *'Restored' hope: what the mandates renew and reclaim*

Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates emerges from a sustained period of constructive engagement on his part with three conceptual models in particular, all of which have deep Lutheran roots. These are the doctrine of the two kingdoms, the orders of creation, and the doctrine of the three estates (see diagram below, my own work, primarily sourced from Maurer, 1970). Bonhoeffer himself was aware that as a term 'mandates' was a working title and wrote in Ethics phase 5, later in 1943, that he hoped to clarify the issue (of order /structure in society) by (DBW 6: 394) 'renewing and reclaiming' the old Lutheran concepts, with the help of a theologically attuned ear.



Bonhoeffer's deep misgivings about any conceptual formulation which would in any way undermine or call into question the foundational understanding of there being a single reality in Christ have already been clearly outlined above. Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms was a soft target for misrepresentation in this respect and the fact that even since before 1932 deeply respected Lutheran theologians had been so re-interpreting Luther as to provide pathways through which much of the thinking and activities of the National Socialists could be re-frameable as being potentially legitimate was distressing to Bonhoeffer. Thus the mandates doctrine, in the criticism, and effective replacement, of 'thinking in two realms' with a doctrine whose starting point and destination is the understanding of reality as unified in Christ, provided a judicious riposte.

Of such misappropriation[46] the two kingdoms doctrine was just one example: another was the Lutheran doctrine of the orders of creation. This has been much discussed in Chapter 4. But with the doctrine of the mandates Bonhoeffer went a step further than he did in 1932 when (at that time) he had repositioned the orders of creation as 'orders of preservation'. The still lurking danger that an 'orders of creation' understanding could be manipulated into providing a theological justification for the ideological categories of blood, race and *Volk* provided the impetus for Bonhoeffer to put forward the doctrine of the mandates as a working substitute for the Lutheran doctrine of the three estates. But it was to be a development which was founded upon and grew out of the Lutheran concept, as shown in the diagram above. What can be seen from this is that three of the four mandates correspond substantially to the three estates [*Oeconomicus, ecclesiasticus, politicus*] (Bonhoeffer also uses *hierarchicus*) and that the new fourth mandate is that of work or culture. The theological logic at work in deriving two mandates (marriage and family, and work) from the single *Oeconomicus* is that in Luther's time the family home was also the centre of work and economic activity whereas since the industrial revolution, the workplace had become in general a separate place to which workers would travel in order to undertake their occupation. But this evolution should not obscure the common foundations which the mandates share with the estates. It could be argued that, as with Luther, so for Bonhoeffer the point at stake is to understand how in the moment of need, the commandment of the Creator God is to be discerned and interpreted in the world and accordingly, how one may live aright. Similarly too, Luther experienced much persecution during his lifetime and was often in situations of duress. Luther did not teach a wholly 'fixed' doctrine and in writing about the doctrine of the Estates, he freely calls them estates, hierarchies*, Gemeinen Orden, Stiften, Regimente*, and so on.[47] It may be asserted that it is essentially in the very fluidity and openness of the term 'mandate' in which the Christological continuity lies, because a mandate refers back to a blessing-giver or to a permission-giver, or to the

[46] For example, Althaus, 1972.
[47] Thus with good reason J. Wiersma's 1996 paper on Bonhoeffer's mandates is entitled 'No fix but flux' (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/img/assets/5435/SecondarySourcesBib.pdf).

provider of an authorisation, and implies a limited realm or scope of operation within a wider compass, where those who are mandated are empowered to act. Bonhoeffer sought to 'renew and restore' an understanding of social order and work with Luther firmly honoured and kept in mind.

7.5 '*Grounded' hope: what the mandates open up as new terrain*

In the earlier section, on what the mandates assume, we saw the importance of a correct understanding and orientation of the above/below structures, and this led to an awareness that the persistent or arbitrary violation of any one of the mandates would lead to its divine character being extinguished. Of course this was particularly pressing for Bonhoeffer in the case of a government demanding a loyalty oath and military service. Hence the challenge, when specific violations occur, is to know at what point *persistent* violation is achieved, and in this, Bonhoeffer would write later in 1942 (DBWE 6: 70 fn.78): 'that which already exists takes precedence over change, unless I discern with certainty the necessity for a change'. Violations (such as those much in evidence under the NS regime to the point of being endemic) thus prompt a return to a true ordering under the divine mandate (*Unterordnung*). In other words, they prompt the restoration of order into a situation where chaos reigns, and as such, violations call for work, that work which will involve restoration of true obedient responsibility for the divine task, such that life can be once again ordered aright. But the call to this work is a 'call and response' dynamic of responsibility. There is a linguistic correspondence here in both the German and English words *Antwort* (response) and *Verantwortlichkeit* (responsibility). The God who speaks to us personally never issues commands 'into the air' (Brunner, 1937, 198) but is a God who addresses us personally and the fitting response to that personal address is *responsibility*. In *History and Good* (2) Bonhoeffer drew attention to the very close relationship which has been developing is his thinking between vocational work (*Beruf*) (ie. work that God asks me to do) and responsibility, writing (DBWE 6:290) 'the two concepts have a uniquely fortuitous correspondence'. He went on, making a progressional linkage between the German words (DBWE 6: 290-291):

> In encounter with Jesus Christ, a person experiences God's call [*Ruf*], and in it the calling [*Berufung*] to a life in community with Christ….From Christ's perspective this life is now the work I am asked to do [*Beruf*]; from my own perspective it is my responsibility.

What Bonhoeffer does in the doctrine of the mandates is to consider more fully the extent to which it is in the workplace where the response to God's call is made good in responsibility. In chapter three we saw how from the earliest days, Bonhoeffer's pattern was to take and sift what was good in the thinking he was exposed to, and then to move on, and make it his own. This is what is happening here. One way in which he did this, in the context of exploring the relationship between

obedience and free responsibility, was to discuss responsibility in the workplace. He concluded that on the face of it there seems to be less responsibility in work (DBW 6:285) for those who have no access to the corridors of power: but here he caught himself thinking aloud and swiftly went on to recall his own theology of personhood, clearly articulated in *Act and Being*, that (in the workplace) any encounter with an 'other' is a place where genuine responsibility is exercised. For Bonhoeffer, responsibility is human freedom that exists only by being bound to God and neighbour. He wrote (DBW 6:269): 'Responsibility is always a mutual relation between persons, derived from the responsibility of Jesus Christ for human beings'. So in fact it was in thinking through what responsibility means in work that Bonhoeffer pressed on to capture most clearly the thought linkages which he has been on the verge of articulating for some while. It is in work [*Beruf*] that Bonhoeffer sees freedom being lived out (or otherwise) and the boundary or limit to the extent of responsibility accordingly being drawn. Bonhoeffer had always written that the other person is a boundary but in *Ethics* he went a step further and asked whether by the law of God as revealed in and through the 10 Commandments and the divine mandates of Marriage, Work and Authority, a boundary for responsible action in work [*Beruf*] is established which cannot be transgressed. Bonhoeffer argued that because the call of Christ is the call to belong to Christ completely, which entails responsibility (for response) towards the issuer of the call, Jesus Christ, the defined field of activity encompassed by work is set free from the trap of being viewed in isolation, in a compartmentalised way. He wrote (DBW 6: 293, trans. altered):

> Let us say I am a medical doctor, for example. In dealing with a concrete case I serve not only my patient, but the body of scientific knowledge, and thus science and knowledge of truth in general. Although in practice I render this service in my concrete situation – for example, at a patient's bedside – I nevertheless remain aware of my responsibility towards the whole, and thus work [*Beruf*] as God intended. In so doing, it may come to the point that in a particular case I must recognise and fulfil my concrete responsibility as a physician no longer at a patient's bedside but for example in taking a public stance against some measure which poses a threat to medical science or to human life or to science in general. Yet I consciously keep in view my responsibility for the whole, and it is only in this that I do my job properly (fulfil my calling) (honour my profession). Work [*Beruf*] is responsibility and responsibility is the whole response of the whole person to reality as a whole. This is precisely the why a myopic self-limitation to one's professional duties in the narrowest sense is out of the question; such a limitation would be irresponsibility.

Bonhoeffer did not draw on the workplace example of the medical doctor 'out of the air' at random in order to illustrate the dangers of an unhealthy compartmentalisation. The medical workplace as a whole, known in part to him through his father's work, had been so caught up in the maelstrom

that across the length and breadth of Germany doctors were engaged in medical killing. Civilian doctors acquiesced in huge numbers to hardening themselves to what Hitler called the (Lifton, 2000, 32) 'ice-cold logic of the necessary', which in practice meant actually carrying out murderous directives. Some resisted, but the majority participated, some discovering an enthusiasm for the work en route. Lifton highlights one doctor in particular, a Dr Hermann Pfanmüller, who was 'working' at the Reich Committee institution at Eglfing-Haar (2000, 61). A non-medical visitor wrote:

> (he had) developed a policy of starving the designated children to death rather than wasting medication on them … he then exhibited the child like a dead rabbit, with a knowing expression and a cynical grin 'for this one it will take two to three more days'. The picture of this fat, grinning man, in his hand the whimpering skeleton, surrounded by other starving children, is still vivid in my mind.

In the context of an unhelpful monasticism what Luther had done in the liberating of all believers to return to the certain knowledge that God was being served in everyday work had become clouded by an over-enthusiastic and uncritical embrace of work. This could play a role in leading under the worst possible combination of circumstances to a situation such as that of Dr Pfanmüller. But with the working doctrine of the mandates Bonhoeffer places the concern for the person (in this case, the child being starved to death) as part of a higher structural concept than that of being employed in a situation of chaos, in the pseudo-medical workplace, and 'because work is responsibility and responsibility is the whole response of the whole person to reality as a whole', by inference dismisses such work as irresponsible, and as such as disobedience to God's command. Good work, by contrast, which has its prototype in the heavenly realm, Bonhoeffer defines as (DBWE 16: 550) 'the creative service of God and Christ towards the world and of human beings towards God', the place where on the basis of God's original creation (DBWE 6:70) 'a world of things and values is created that is destined for the glory and service of Jesus Christ', and similarly where (DBWE 16: 526) 'new values are created for the glorification and service of Jesus Christ'.

7.6 *A reflection on potential contemporary applications of 'mandates thinking'*

Accordingly, for Bonhoeffer, work has a 'high' status. The 'ecology of the mandates' prepares the way for the presence of Christ in the world, and Bonhoeffer's concern for good work has suggested that there is something about work which in a special way keeps open the possibility of Christ in the world. At their best (and when work is at its best) people achieve dignity in work: work allows and facilitates human flourishing in a unique way. In work people realise their *telos*. For Bonhoeffer, it has emerged from this study that it is when we work that we flourish as human beings and realise ourselves, and also that the immensity of the contrast with the bad work he saw

all around him in Nazi Germany proved a key stimulus in helping this awareness come to the fore. There is a sense in which it is the work itself which when it is good work makes it possible for Christ to be in the world. Such thinking about mutual limitation and flourishing could - by way of complete contrast - provide a helpful framework for ethical thought in a contemporary situation, such as that surrounding the current trend to re-position prostitution as 'sex work', and accordingly to make such activity more respectable/ less stigmatised by associating it more closely with everyday work in the world. Such a transition is appealing at the level of compassion and support for those involved in this 'industry' and unappealing at other levels. Writing in 1972, J. Pieper, an author well known to Bonhoeffer in his era, makes the point well (Pieper, 2011, 28):

> Contemporary society, organised around the principle of the division of labour, favours the view that action can be transposed to a moral perspective by the simple expedient of applying instead the term 'labour'. And so 'labour' – which of itself 'reeks' no more than money does (*non olet*, as the scholastics used to say) can become 'camouflage for action'. That is, one can disengage a purely technical artefact [*Verrichtung*] belonging to the realm of the *artes* from the total context of morality by concentrating solely on the labour that went into it. By its very nature, a moral action is orientated to the meaning of existence as a whole: but when 'activity' becomes 'labour' then a person can claim he is 'only doing his job'. As long as the work is, as we say, a 'job well done', everything seems in order. Not even one's humanity seems at risk.

In an article on the BBC website (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-25588234) dated Jan 2014 and entitled 'the escorts who want to rebrand male prostitution as a business' the content suggests that the sex worker is very satisfied with their life choice, has the financial freedom to pick and choose work at will, and (perhaps in the low point of the appeal of the article) receives the supportive affirmation of a proud parent. A traditional view is that chastity is God's plan for the unmarried and that a state of singleness before God is commendable. A mandates framework would suggest that the lifestyle choice or activity of a sex worker is incompatible with the mandate of marriage, and hence sex work does not 'keep open' this area for Christ. The concept of 'flourishing' pertains here as a life of prostitution/ sex work cannot reasonably be represented as one of human flourishing without a wholesale distortion of the available evidence to the contrary. But more significantly in a mandates view, work (not to mention parenting) entails mutual responsibility towards the other person. In sex work the consumer of the services provided uses monetary funds to secure the degradation of another (and the higher the price, the greater levels of degradation and health risk the sex worker will accept) and in this view (for reasons alluded to above) the mandate of work is violated, the integrity of both the purchaser/ initiator and worker is forfeit, persistent violation of the divine mandate is achieved and the correct balance between the

ordering of the mandates themselves falls into disarray. A sense of how this thinking and understanding might help frame a more compassionate understanding and engagement towards this and other examples of such brokenness might be informed by or perhaps analogous, say, with Bonhoeffer's own approach. We may observe that it was one characterised by silence (particularly towards believers) about his own role in the conspiracy, but a mandates-informed thought process which was accompanied by his determination to play a constructive role, whatever the personal cost. This is not the only example where 'mandates thinking' may be of some use: for example, in a further development of this line of thought, it is arguable (in terms of the mandates serving to prompt believers and those outside the faith community to retain a balance in society by being held in harmonious relationship one with another) that the mandate of the family provides a limit to the mandate of work by restraining enthusiasm for work on a Sunday and thereby informing and facilitating the correct work of governance in guiding the legislation surrounding this and similar issues. Mandates thinking will also be helpful in asking 'at what point in store opening hours is 'persistent and arbitrary violation' of the commandment to rest arrived at?' Again, it could be argued, along similar lines, that the mandate of family provides a natural constraint to the mandate of work by the natural needs of a spouse or partner (not least for mutual support in the care and nurture of infants) for there to be appropriate boundaries and limits to the mandate of work.

7.7 *Information we 'need to know': the mandates as a legacy of hope*

To any relationship there are boundaries and limits: and being a co-worker in on-going co-operative responsible relationship with God and others also requires an attentive discernment of God's command. The mandates thus offer a structure into which Bonhoeffer is able to introduce the idea that when loyalty to a government and the order it provides conflicts with a call to follow Christ because its mandate has been extinguished, that there is a category of response remaining open to the believer which requires the most attentive discernment of God's command in a situation where ordinary moral demands provide no guidance. He describes this as the (DBWE 16: 517) 'venture of responsibility' or (DBWE 16: 518) the 'venture of action', which the authors of the DBWE series allude to as being an almost uniquely clear insight into Bonhoeffer's motivation to enter the conspiracy. This is surely the case but what is also helpful in this respect is to observe, for example in DBWE 6: 70, that Bonhoeffer places within the mandate of responsible work, both concealed (from the untrained eye) and articulated (for the discerning reader) underpinned by a Christological formulation, a further significant contributory theological basis and *casus belli* for the tyrannicide which by the time of writing he had come to see as his own responsible work. To be clear: within the fuller understanding of what work meant for him, as evidenced by this thesis, Bonhoeffer saw it as his work, his role and his call to be fully involved in the conspiracy against Hitler. In this he accepted guilt, for which he assumed responsibility, but in this he found freedom,

and when all else seemed lost, he found hope, hope enough to ask a 19-year-old just at exactly this time in 1942 for her hand in marriage. He wrote (DBWE 6: 70): 'Such true responsibility consists in aligning the concrete form of the divine mandates with their origin, existence, and goal in Jesus Christ'.

Hence the title of this chapter: *Beruf ist Verantwortung* [Work is responsibility] and the central thrust of this section that essentially the mandates leave us with a legacy of hope. Bonhoeffer saw it as his work freely to choose involvement in the work of the re-alignment of the mandates towards Christ, which is his case meant a calling to the guilt of tyrannicide in obedient response to God's command. It has been a frequent refrain of chapter 5 that in this respect, a very attentive and serious attitude of listening is required, and this cannot be emphasised too strongly. For example: the fact that it is the attentive discernment of God's command in relation to the Lordship of Christ wherein lies the entirety of the divine warrant could not be more starkly illustrated than by an incident at just around this time. When Bonhoeffer's superior Canaris, on the basis of an eyewitness account which had reached him, went to Hitler to complain about the slaughter of a transport of 14,000 Jews executed in Rumbuli on November 30th 1941, as recounted by Breitman (1999, 84), Hitler is supposed to have retorted: 'You're getting too soft, Sir. I have to do it, because after me no-one else will'. The issue at stake for the resistance was that the Führer had issued himself what amounted to a divine warrant to dispose of matters of life and death, and efforts to remove him were not proving very successful. But by the time of the late winter of 1942/3, the German resistance operations to eliminate Hitler would (finally) become active attempts to kill him. It would correspond with the timing of other heroic and costly efforts to resist the regime: on February 18th, 1943, Hans and Sophie Scholl were arrested and quickly condemned to death by the so-called people's court: having denounced the murder of 300,000 Jews in a pamphlet as a crime, they had to be disposed of, much to the approbation of their fellow students (Fest, 1994, 198). But the Führer had an acute ability to sense danger. In one instance among many which could be cited of this apparent sixth sense, on 17th February 1943, in a needed visit to the *Ostfront*, Hitler made a snap decision to fly to Saporoshe instead of Poltava, where he had been scheduled to travel to: in Poltava, *Abwehr*-primed generals in Field Marshal Weich's Army Group, unbeknown to him, were waiting and had been planning to overpower him (Fest, 1994, 193).[48] Such were the shifting sands of Bonhoeffer's wartime world. When Bonhoeffer's superior Canaris flew to Smolensk in the immediate aftermath of this latest frustrating reversal of fortunes, on 7th

[48] But even in his revised destination Saporoshe, Hitler seemed to lead a charmed existence. He had wholly miscalculated the fluidity of the military situation, to the extent that while he was there, Russian tanks drove along the road beside the airfield. It was a moment when a turning point in world history was precariously close. The reaction of his loyal entourage (unfortunately from so many standpoints) provided a dramatic rescue: 'Baur his pilot drove into town to urge him to hurry, and the three Condors took off just as Russians had taken up positions. They had not attacked the airfield as they had run out of fuel' (Hoffman, 1977, 280).

March 1943, on the pretext of holding a general intelligence conference, he brought with him Dohnanyi, Oster and the box of explosive which would actually be successfully primed and placed by Schlabrendorff six days later on March 13th inside the aircraft Hitler used to fly back from Smolensk to Rastenberg. The British-manufactured fuse failed to detonate the bomb, which was (despite numerous challenges) subsequently retrieved and disposed of (at no small risk) without discovery. In all of this highly charged and secretive all-or-nothing work Bonhoeffer was intimately and thoroughly involved to the extent that the car which transported Dohnanyi had left from the Bonhoeffer home in Marienburger Allee, was driven by Bonhoeffer's friend Eberhard Bethge, and was in fact the car belonging to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's father (cf. Clements, 1990, 38). It is also significant that Bonhoeffer did not tell his closest friend and confidant Bethge about the contents of the luggage, and the reason why not is alluded to by the editors of the DBW series in the preface to volume 16. Around just this time Helmut von Moltke wrote from Sweden to a friend in England (*Letters to Freya*, 284) [25.3.43 to Lionel Curtis] about what it was like trying to get anything done within the constraints of intensive Gestapo surveillance of all the then available communication media, spot checks in trams and trains, and especially considering the ethical difficulty of entrusting secret information to anyone completely trustworthy 'because the secret police have methods of questioning where they first break the will but leave the intelligence awake, thereby inducing the victim to speak all he knows: therefore you must limit information to those who absolutely need it' (DBW 16: 8). For Bonhoeffer, working in a context where knowledge was transmitted on a need-to-know basis, Bethge did not 'need to know' about the bomb. But the mandates needed to be realigned.

The story concludes – and connects

Bonhoeffer was arrested on April 5th 1943 and would never again be free. The surrounding frenzy of murderous activity would in the end engulf him, thanks to the discovery (exactly two years to the day later) of Canaris' personal diaries in Zossen (and hardly due to the original Zossen files as Bethge somewhat unfortunately suggests). Bonhoeffer's own involvement in the resistance and conspiracy, involving ethical choices of the highest magnitude at every turn, such as that documented here, would be the *pièce de résistance* of his work theology and provide the fullest example possible of the importance to him of good work, carried out in full knowledge of the cost. Perhaps precisely because he continued to live in the theological orientation of hope, it is a fair assessment to observe that even despite this aspect (the conspiracy and its cost) of what he considered to be his own life's work, Bonhoeffer continued to think rather 'sunnily' about actual work, *contra*, for example, Simone Weil after her year of factory work (cf. Weil, 1988, 117, 118, 121ff.). Indeed, it may be that he judged that the audience he largely wrote for – presumably his fellow-resistors and their successors - less biblically literate than himself and largely everyday

people without connection to the church – were thereby best served. But for us today, there is relevance in his work theology.It may be observed that Bonhoeffer's theology of work teaches us that it is often in the resisting of the evil that the work of the good is done. One of the larger stories which emerges from this study is that resistance against structural evil is sometimes most effectively carried out by non-compliance with what may appear on the surface as trivial demands for conformance. An attentive discernment to God's commands is required here in the assessing of exactly where the point of intervention needs to fall and what is clear is that there is no substitute for a life of radical discipleship with all that that requires. It has been argued in earlier chapters that Bonhoeffer had insights which he shared repeatedly with other clergy and which were largely ignored, with the consequence that his work life became a moving example of Christian faithfulness in dealing with the challenge and disappointment of carrying such a level of crucial insight in a situation of powerlessness. From such a position Bonhoeffer chose to make it his everyday work to live an ordinary life of obedience, perhaps in a similar way to ordinary people who are challenged today to do the same as a defiant act of faithfulness in an era when terrorists use weapons or explosives to kill shoppers in supermarkets, coffee-drinkers in cafés, and commuters on the underground rail network. Powerlessness is perhaps an apposite place from which and in which work theology can help us to begin afresh, but not only this: Bonhoeffer's theology of work is both relevant and distinctive in particular by its insistence on the non-negotiable centrality of integrity. The message 'seek integrity' is communicated loudly and clearly by his life and work, and integrity for Bonhoeffer is something which cuts both ways. Integrity needs to look forwards with laser precision insight and with increasing scrutiny into the ethical supply chain of all work tasks which are being requested of us, but at the same time, integrity looks backwards with an equally penetrating gaze right through into the inner life of each individual. Bonhoffer would have resonated with the words of Thomas Aquinas (2003, 45):

> Let not Moses speak to me, therefore, but you, the Lord my God, everlasting truth, speak lest I die and prove barren if I am merely given outward advice and am not inflamed within; lest the word heard and not kept, known and not loved, believed and not obeyed, rise up in judgement against me.

An individual's inward life and spirituality is above all what drives outward behaviour, and Bonhoeffer's work theology calls us in this area ceaselessly to beactive in seeking after integrity. By way of analogy, we are to seek after integrity in the same committed way that Vincent Donovan describes real faith (Donovan, 1982, 62):

> A Masai elder pointed out that the word my Masai catechist and I had used to convey faith was not a very satisfactory word in their language. It meant literally 'to agree to'. I

> myself knew that the word had that shortcoming. He said that to believe in that word was similar to a white hunter shooting an animal with his gun from a great distance. Only his eyes and his fingers took part in the act. We should find another word. He said that for a person really to believe is like a lion going after her prey. Her nose and eyes and ears pick up on the prey. Her legs give her the speed to catch it. All the power of her body is involved in the terrible death leap and single blow to the neck with the front paw, the blow that actually kills. And as the animal goes down the lion envelops it in her arms, (Africans refer to the front legs of an animal as its arms) pulls it to herself and makes it part of herself. This is the way a lion kills. This is the way a person believes. This is what faith is.

In such a way does Bonhoeffer's theology of work call us today to seek integrity. In our own generation, people are thirsty for the genuine article. The prolific stories of high-profile and well-remunerated people who lack integrity which abound in our day are high currency and carry an added poignancy. In Bonhoeffer's time, real integrity was much needed, and was in short supply, but when it was carried through into appropriate non-compliance, it had tremendous impact. Writing in *Disability and the Christian Tradition*, B. Wannenwetsch draws attention to a note written by Visser't Hooft drafted in 1943 after a conversation with Bonhoeffer, one which concerns the leader of the Bethel institute for the mentally handicapped. The note reads (Brock, 2016, 360): 'Bodelschwingh has refused to fill out the questionnaires which are used as a basis of selection, and so far no-one has been killed'. This, in Bonhoeffer's day, was surely good work.

There is a work-related postscript to Bonhoeffer's arrest, provided by the actions of the Gestapo. Green notes in *'Theology of Sociality'* (1999, 305):

> When Bonhoeffer was arrested on April 5th 1943 the Gestapo removed (and later returned) the manuscript of '*The Ethical and the Christian as a subject'*. [Green notes that] it may be significant that these were the papers left out on his desk to be discovered, since they focus more on ethics for normal life than on resistance ethics.

It does seem most significant that we have been left with this particular message. In the curious work and ethical logic of the Gestapo, they had contributed to preserving order by returning the apparently un-threatening work of a theologian, which had, it would seem, passed one of the tests for which it was always intended. It was a gesture for their part delivered in a language of great unfamiliarity to the usual voice of the Gestapo, a voice almost exclusively associated with

brutality, and its occurrence here in a different mode is of itself no small signal of hope, a signal of hope speaking out from beyond Bonhoeffer's arrest into the eschatalogical domain of the restoration of order to the workplace. In the end, Bonhoeffer's responsible work has left us with a legacy of hope.[49]

[49] Given that Bonhoeffer and Klemperer both spent time in prison in Nazi Germany and both were writers in resistance, it is remarkable that their paths literally almost crossed. During the late afternoon of Wednesday 4th April 1945, as the US 3rd Army forces penetrated further into the disintegrating remnants of the 3rd Reich towards Weiden, (*The Times*, 9th April 1945, map available) both Bonhoeffer and Klemperer were, briefly, in Regensburg at the same time. As Bonhoeffer's guarded prisoner transport drew into Regensburg toward evening (Bonhoeffer was being conveyed as one of the kith-and kin prisoners) [*Sippenhäftlinge*] so too Victor Klemperer was in Regensburg, in the shattered station, awaiting the departure of the scarcely viable passenger train for Munich, one which finally left at around 11 p.m. that night. Klemperer for his part was a particularly guarded traveller (in the figurative, or fugitive, sense): having sensibly dispensed with his Jewish star, he had taken the opportunity which availed through the general meltdown in organisational efficiency to acquire a temporary (Aryan) resident card in Piskowitz, a small town some way to the north of firestorm-devastated Dresden. Early the following Monday morning, as the Klemperers went on to breakfast with an 'interesting couple' (2000, 550) at Munich's bomb-damaged Excelsior hotel, by the station, and progressed to a wearisome day of 'errands and queues,' (2000, 550) Bonhoeffer was hanged.

Afterword

In the opening section of his magisterial volume *Europe: a History* Norman Davies makes the profound observation that (1996, 2):

> 'Current affairs' cannot become 'History' until half a century has elapsed, runs one opinion, 'until documents have become available and hindsight has cleared men's minds'. … Four hundred years ago, Sir Walter Raleigh, writing under sentence of death, understood the dangers perfectly. 'Whosoever in writing a modern history shall follow the truth too near the heels' he wrote 'it may happily strike out his teeth'.

Almost seventy years have passed since the death of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and the time is right for a fresh appraisal, at least in part, of his contribution. Many documents have indeed become available, and so, it could be argued, in similar vein, with the passing of time, our minds have cleared somewhat in relation to his life, his death, and his theological legacy. In one vivid example of this, Bonhoeffer's faithful biographer Bethge chose to include in his otherwise brilliant publication in a crucial closing moment the testimony of the prison doctor responsible for certifying those executed in Flossenburg as deceased. The doctor's recollection, conveyed by Bethge, was that (928):

> Through the half-open door in one room of the huts I saw Pastor Bonhoeffer, before taking off his prison garb, kneeling on the floor praying fervently to his God. I was most deeply moved by the way this unusually lovely man prayed, so devout and so certain that God heard his prayer. At the place of execution, he again said a short prayer and then climbed the steps to the gallows, brave and composed … in the almost 50 years I have worked as a doctor, I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.

The impact and repercussions of this statement have been far-reaching in the sense that just as Bonhoeffer's life has come to be seen as remarkable, the fact that his death was apparently also remarkable has had an added poignancy and certainly contributed at least in some measure to his posthumous renown. But (with apologies of course for the Bethge dental bill) sitting in the Bonhoeffer house in Berlin in 2010 I was able to read an article published in 1993 by Jørgen, B. and Mogensen, L.F., writing in *Ein Zeuge aus dem KZ Flossenbürg* in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Mensch hinter Mauern*. In this they provide an unemotive, thoroughgoing and step-by-step rebuttal of the entirety of the statement of Dr H. Fischer-Hüllstrung and conclude (1993, 107, my translation) that his statement is: 'fanciful nonsense. There were no steps or gallows, or a special

permission for Dietrich Bonhoeffer'. Reading this article had the profoundest impact upon me as it re-cast the narrative of Bonhoeffer's death into the realm of the un-remarkable. The authors continue (1993, 107):

> This first-hand account from Flossenberg demands from many of us - who have allowed ourselves to be seduced by the doctor's testimony to airbrush the martyrdom of Dietrich Bonhoeffer by dint of a pious legend – that we undergo a stiff but wholesome process of self-correction.

My assertion is that the process of 'documents coming to light' which Davies suggests is necessary for the writing of history has proven most helpful in this instance, and that the ensuing 'stiff but wholesome process of self-correction' is a good one both for individual students of Bonhoeffer and also for Bonhoeffer scholarship as a whole. This is important to note at this concluding stage because the Bonhoeffer narrative as a whole is still incomplete and a correction to the historical record is of substantive importance. In their recent publication *No ordinary men*, Elizabeth Sifton and Fritz Stern issue a call for this kind of revision to be undertaken, commenting that Bethge's interpretation of Bonhoeffer is at times delivered rather monotonously in a somewhat wooden arrangement (interspersing blocks of background information about theological or ecclesiastical people with nuggets of quotidian detail) (2013, 146)[50] and needs challenging.

A similar need for revision surrounds the impression created by Bethge that somehow the lives of many of the conspirators could have been spared had they only not been so foolish as to create a war crimes dossier on Hitler, a dossier known as the Zossen files, (which is the name of the place where they were hidden and discovered). The impression made is that the conspirators also repeatedly overlooked or failed to seize opportunities to destroy the incriminating evidence when arrested and under suspicion, particularly in the context of the recriminations abounding following the failure of the July 20th plot. The sense of lack of wisdom is so strong that it led Hans von Dohnanyi's wife Christine, who survived the war, to write a letter in defence of her former husband about the creation of this dossier and its temporary survival, a letter which is included rather belatedly and rather poignantly at the conclusion of Bethge's 1,048 page volume. But according to Hoffman (*The history of the German Resistance*, 1977, 513) these documents did not assist the Gestapo very much. In similar vein, Joachim Fest's evidence (*Plotting Hitler's Death*, 1996) points out in relation to these papers that the Nazis' belief in the unity of Volk and Führer could not survive the Zossen documents and what they revealed. Their discovery apparently so alarmed Hitler (Fest, 1996, 310) that he ordered that none of the documents was to be entered into evidence in the trials before the People's court without his specific approval. According to Bassett

[50] Sadly these excellent authors repeat the Bethge Zossen error documented here.

inter alia it was not the Zossen files which led to Hitler's April 5th 1945 order to Kaltenbrunner to (Basset, 2005, 288) 'proceed with the immediate liquidation of the conspirators' but rather a completely separate discovery. Bassett (205) notes that it was the reporting of the discovery (also at Zossen) of the complete 5 volumes of Canaris' diaries which unleashed the wrathful edict (cf. in confirmation of this Hoffmann 1977, 530 citing also Deutsch). Once again, the process of 'documents coming to light' has proven helpful for the writing of history because in the light of these two correctives we are able to state that Bonhoeffer died an un-remarkable death and that what triggered his execution in the final analysis was not a collective decision in which he had some contributive part but more an individual's decision (Canaris' decision to keep detailed diaries) in which he was uninvolved. The wholesome process of self-correction in relation to the first re-write holds perhaps for the believer a different final perspective from the second, and certainly - for Christine von Dohnanyi and many like her - places the fate of all the conspirators on a wholly different footing.

Thus in summary, the time is ripe after these many years for at least a partial fresh appraisal of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and contribution, and that is what has been set down in this thesis. It has been a narrative paper, re-telling *in nuce* the story of Bonhoeffer's life and work journey, highlighting the central importance to him from the earliest days of the subject of work. This has been a hermeneutical key to a deeper understanding of Bonhoeffer which until now has lain undiscovered, and whose absence has limited the wider impact of Bonhoeffer's contribution than might otherwise have been the case. An introduction reviewed a limited selection of some of the key literature on Bonhoeffer and noted in particular the importance, in relation to work, of sociality, reality and freedom. A contextualising Chapter 2 argued that the German experience of work under the Nazis in the period 1926-1945, and particularly between 1938-1945, amounted to the betrayal and dehumanisation of work, which contributed to, and represented, a moral and theological crisis, into which Bonhoeffer's resistance would make a positive contribution. It has been particularly important to offer an enhanced degree of contextualisation in order to understand the dialogue into which Bonhoeffer was entering and some of the broader contemporary issues in which he played a part. Chapter 3 has examined Bonhoeffer's family background and how the experience of his family home informed his thinking about work, and has explored the significance of Lutheran thinking on work in this light, closing with a reflection into the area around 'How does the Christian believer connect life and work?' Chapter 4 'A well-hidden *Verlassenheit*' has argued that as Bonhoeffer's life and experiences continued to deepen his thinking about work, he chose to prioritise work over a friendship/relationship with Elizabeth Zinn which might, had he not made this choice, have developed in the direction of marriage. We saw in *Act and Being* how in Bonhoeffer's thinking the pathway to liberation from the violation of reality represented by a framework grafted around the autonomous, isolated I, which, centred around the omnicompetence of the knowing mind, understands everything from itself, travels of necessity via the '*Lichtung*' of

the Christian community. The chapter made a connection between Bonhoeffer's life and theological thought by asking whether Bonhoeffer was in fact experiencing despair as he chose to give this community priority at some personal cost. Chapter 5, '*Verantwortliche theologische Arbeit'* introduced the importance of 'order' in society, tracing how the concept came to be abused in Germany, in the context particularly of the influence on Bonhoeffer of Stählin and Brunner. A detailed engagement with Brunner's *The Divine Imperative* has advanced the idea that the influence of this work on Bonhoeffer was somewhat more profound than has been acknowledged until now. In this chapter it became clear that when the hermeneutical key of work is applied to an understanding of Bonhoeffer, two insights in particular are gained: first, there is much light shed on the still un-solved question as to when in 1932 his life took a 'turn' (and the chapter developed an argument that the 'turn' which happened for Bonhoeffer may have had its roots in a conference speech in Czechoslovakia in July 1932, given that it was at this time that he articulated clearly and definitively the 'job' of responsible theological work); second, it was argued that it was in Bonhoeffer's formulation of the job of responsible theological work that he deepened his own understanding of work and voiced the call to his own life's work in resisting the National Socialist regime. Chapter 6, '*Unser Kampf',* has suggested that the question which Bonhoeffer had been formulating was: how can a Christian today live and work with integrity? During this period we traced how Bonhoeffer journeyed from a position of using paid work as a basis for opposition to the regime through to a realisation in 1934 that work might well mean resistance unto death, a realisation which he took with him as he continued to think about how to live and work all the way through to the end. He came to see the workplace increasingly as the place where the reality of faith is expressed. The chapter explored his rediscovery - from a place of his own financial integrity - of a Luther-inspired, committed discipleship, centred on the Bible, which found expression in his own work in Finkenwalde, the pastorates and particularly in his writing of *Nachfolge*. The chapter traced Bonhoeffer's understanding of work as clergy, pastoral work and preaching work, as well as the work of discipleship: an approach which he experienced as an on-going challenge, as so many around him found reasons or excuses to continue (or even begin) to accept remuneration from a compromised church organisational structure. Because of the centrality of work for Bonhoeffer, the date of 31st July 1938 was noted as a milestone of great significance for Bonhoeffer's entry to the conspiracy, and it was highlighted that its true significance has until now been at worst, missed and at best, inadequately represented.

Chapter 7 has further considered the theme that *Beruf ist Verantwortung* – work is responsibility. The wartime period during which Bonhoeffer wrote *Ethics* largely co-incided with his engagement to Maria von Wedemeyer and his most active involvement in the conspiracy to kill Hitler. The thematic words around his theological thinking about work are responsibility and freedom and it has become apparent that Bonhoeffer saw his resistance involvement, which encompassed organising the transport arrangements of the explosive devices used in the March

1943 Schlabrendorff attempt on Hitler's life, as a work calling, which he had the (freely assumed) responsibility to fulfil. The chapter used this evidence together with Bonhoeffer's written work to argue that central to this decision was Bonhoeffer's formulation of the camouflaged mandate of work, a concept which Bonhoeffer experimented with during this latter part of his life, and that this aspect of his legacy has, accordingly, until now been undervalued. In this respect Bonhoeffer's doctrine of the mandates has been carefully re-examined and then interpreted and re-presented as a doctrine of Christian hope.

Statement of originality

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. The original contribution to knowledge provided by this thesis is three-fold:

1. It is a narrative re-telling of the story of Bonhoeffer which engages with, and relates biography to, history and context in a new and original way.
2. It uses work as the primary hermeneutical key towards an understanding of Bonhoeffer.
3. It adds to a wider understanding of a theology of work by making its own contribution to an ever-growing field.

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